

THOUGHTS ON  
BAPTISM

W. BARRY COLE

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Cole, W. Barry.

Some thoughts on baptism



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SOME THOUGHTS ON  
BAPTISM

BY THE  
REV. W. BARRY COLE  
INCUMBENT OF SHANKLIN DONATIVE

ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, διανοίγων καὶ παρατίθεμενος

*Act. Apost. xvii, 3*

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## PREFACE

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THIS LITTLE TREATISE is issued in the hope that those who will patiently read what is not very artistically arranged, or eloquently expressed, may, by the Divine blessing, be helped in regard to some of the difficulties which surround the Baptismal question.

These difficulties, the Author thinks, are not a little diminished when, instead of seeking to maintain the tenets of this or that body of Christians, we refer every question for solution with unbiassed mind to the testimony of Holy Scripture.

The reader will find many points connected with the subject handled very briefly; the outline here presented might easily have been filled up in greater detail. The more condensed form, however, has been chosen in preference to the more diffuse, in the belief that it would prove more acceptable in these days of rapid thought.

The Author would not have ventured to publish these pages had he not first submitted his manu-



script to most eminent and competent judges, and received from them encouragement to proceed.

It now alone remains to pray that in God's mercy what is here written may be blessed to the edification of each reader; and if, in addition to this, it should tend to lessen division by removing any ground of strife, the reward reaped would be great indeed.

SHANKLIN PARSONAGE :

*Nov.* 1889.



# SOME THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM

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## *BAPTISM PRIMARILY A MISSIONARY INSTITUTION*

### I

HAVING regard to the commission given by our risen Lord to His disciples to 'go into all the world, preach the Gospel, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,' we note the important truth that baptism is an ordinance most closely connected with missionary work; in fact, that it is primarily and essentially a missionary institution; and if we would obtain a right understanding of its intention, use, and effect, we must needs consider it more in relation to the external growth of the Church than in relation to those internal processes by which the Body of Christ is nurtured and established.

Many wrong views concerning baptism would long ago have been abandoned had its direct and immediate connection with missionary work been perceived; whereas, strange to say, this important consideration seems to have been in a very large

degree overlooked or forgotten; and it must be regarded as some excuse for errors which have so abundantly crept in that, when they first originated, the missionary work of the Church was to a great extent neglected, this neglect rendering it a matter of extreme difficulty to appreciate and understand the true nature and use of baptism.

Let us, therefore, in the outset recognize this view of the matter and give it its due weight.

Matt. xxviii.  
19.

The proposition is sufficiently proved by the Scripture reference already given, but a review of missionary work, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles, and carried down to the present hour, will convince any thinking person that it is ever where Christianity comes in contact with heathenism, Judaism, or, as in these later ages, with Mahomedanism, that baptism is to be seen and may be studied in its real work, use, and effects; whereas, if the mind be turned in upon the internal history of organized and non-missionary Churches, that then the view of this ordinance necessarily becomes obscured, and its use in danger of being misunderstood.

Moreover, the argument from Scripture establishing the missionary character of baptism becomes stronger when it is observed that, where no reference is being made to missionary work, baptism is passed over in silence, and salvation is made dependent upon faith only. Such a passage, for example, is found in John v. 24: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and

believeth on Him that sent Me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.'

Here we find no allusion to baptism. Regeneration and salvation are made to appear as directly consequent upon faith, and faith only.

Many similar passages exist; and if the question were asked—why is baptism sometimes mentioned as necessary to salvation, and sometimes not?—we can find at least one satisfactory solution in the reply that baptism is an agency without which the missionary work of the Church cannot be effectually carried on; but as this work is not always under consideration, so the necessity for baptism is not always asserted.

## II

NOR should St. Paul's declaration, 'For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel,' be taken as of contrary import. 1 Cor. i. 17.

At first sight these words might seem to point to a dissociation of the ordinance of baptism from the great apostolic work of evangelization; but a little consideration will suffice to remove this impression.

The point of the Apostle's remark is evident: not that he regarded baptism as of small importance, or unnecessary to the work in which he was engaged, but that it occupied in his mind a position distinctly subordinate to that of preaching the Gospel.

John vi. 27.

So, when our Saviour charged His disciples not to labour for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, He never intended to abrogate the great law that man must work and labour in the sweat of his brow, but simply to subordinate it to that higher labour, which seeks to find spiritual sustenance for the soul.

1 Pet. iii. 3.

And so St. Peter, without forbidding it, subordinates the outward adorning of the body to that better and more enduring adornment of the inner man of the heart.

It is not unimportant, therefore, to bear in mind that while the ordinance of baptism is distinctly a missionary institution, it must be put in its proper place, which, though subordinate, is yet essential.

John iv. 2.

This deduction is made still more evident when it is remembered that our blessed Saviour altogether abstained from administering with His own hand the external rite of baptism, leaving this to His disciples, whilst He Himself engaged solely in the higher function of preaching the Gospel.

Acts x. 48.

As also we find St. Peter, probably for a like motive, commanding Cornelius and his friends to be baptized by others (by whom exactly does not appear), rather than administer the rite personally.

Deut. xxx.

But in our Lord's case there was an additional cause for this abstention, for of old this distinction existed, that man circumcised the body outwardly, and the Lord the heart inwardly; so in the new

economy man baptizes with water, but the Lord Jesus, and He only, with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Matt. iii. 11.

## RELATION OF BAPTISM TO FAITH

## III

HAVING thus dwelt upon the missionary character of the rite of baptism, the next most prominent fact calling for attention is its connection with FAITH.

Let it, therefore, be most carefully noted and borne in mind that throughout the New Testament baptism is always more or less associated with faith.

Take three or four of the most striking passages:—

‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.’ Mark xvi. 16.

‘And when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of the Lord Jesus they were baptized, both men and women.’ Acts viii. 12.

‘Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.’ Acts xviii. 8.

‘One Lord, one faith, one baptism.’ Ephes. iv. 5.

And, in at least one passage, this connection is so striking and so close that it can almost be said that ‘being baptized’ is identified with ‘believing’ as one and the same thing. This is in Acts ii. 38, where we read ‘Repent and *be baptized* every one

Acts xx. 21.

of you in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins.' Is not this almost identical with saying 'Repent and *believe* every one of you,' &c. ? especially when we remember that 'Repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ' was the sum and substance of all apostolic teaching.

In these words of St. Peter it is remarkable that faith is not mentioned : it is quite evident that baptism takes its place.

So again, a comparison of Matt. xxi. 32, where we read that the 'publicans and harlots *believed* John,' with Luke vii. 29, where it is stated that the 'publicans justified God, *being baptized* with the baptism of John,' shows how believing and being baptized are almost interchangeable terms.

Too great prominence can scarcely be given to this connection between baptism and faith. Baptism without faith can scarcely be said to be any baptism at all ; but this faith is not faith in baptism itself, nor in the benefits of baptism, nor even in the promises connected with baptism, but rather in the word of the truth of the Gospel, in the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and especially in the Divine Personality of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose disciples we become in and through baptism.



## IV

WHAT then, it is important to ask, is this connection between faith and baptism, so close that the two terms seem almost interchangeable?

The answer is simple.

Baptism is the outward expression and declaration of faith—an initial confession of belief in the name (*i.e.* the Godhead) of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

God saw fit to command that *whoever* should hear the Gospel and believe should not remain a *secret* believer in the truth of Christianity, but should openly confess and acknowledge before men his allegiance to Christ; should openly join himself to the Christian Church, or general body of believers; and that the Christian Church should openly and publicly receive such an one into their number; and the ordinance by and in which the believer joins himself to the Church, and the Church receives the believer to membership and fellowship is Baptism.

The first thing, therefore, which a convert from heathenism or Judaism is called upon to do by Divine Command, is to declare formally, in and by baptism, his repudiation of his former heathenism or Judaism, and his acceptance of the distinctive truths of the Christian religion—his abandonment of whatsoever idols he once worshipped, and his submission to the true God, even the True Jehovah.



And this acknowledgment of belief must either be done publicly in the sight and hearing of his former companions and acquaintances, or, if in private, it must be so publicly announced as having been done that none may be ignorant of the transaction.

‘Aut agitur res in seemis aut acta refertur.’

## V

THUS we see how baptism creates, and was intended to create, a boundary line, capable of indefinite expansion, but still a boundary line, clear, sharp, visible, and definite: a circumference *within which* are all who believe in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and *beyond which* are all those who are still heathen, or Mahommedans, or, being Jews, reject Christ, and hope to be saved by the Law of Moses.

Mark iv. 11.

It was with reference to this line—this boundary line—that our Lord said unto His disciples, ‘Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are *without* all these things are done in parables’—an expression used also by St. Paul occasionally, notably in 1 Cor. v. 12: ‘What have I to do to judge them also which are *without*, Do not ye judge them that are *within*?’

## VI

BUT in asserting that baptism draws a line including all that believe and excluding all that do

not, we are met by the fact that to 'believe' is a term bearing a very wide acceptance in Scripture.

This will become evident by referring to such passages as John viii. 30, 31: 'As He spake these words many believed on Him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue in My word then are ye My disciples indeed;' or John xii. 42: 'Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him.'

Whence it is evident that all are said to believe who are convinced that Jesus is the Christ, whether this persuasion be a deep-seated emotion of the heart, or arise from the irresistible force of truth upon the conscience, or whether it be merely a mental conviction, caused perhaps by the evidence of miracles, leaving the heart unaffected. Of such we read in John ii. 23: 'Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, many believed in His name when they saw the miracles which He did, but Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men.' These last words point very significantly to the fact that the faith of these men was of a very superficial order.

There are manifestly, therefore, several degrees and qualities of faith. The higher one alone, which is described as working by love, availing anything for justification.

Gal. v. 6,  
and vi. 15.

## VII

Thus the question naturally presents itself, whether it is proper that baptism should be used to declare a faith of any kind, or whether it should be restricted to the declaration of that higher and purer sort of faith which justifies?

Now it is sufficiently plain that Christ's words, *Mark xvi. 16.* 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' can have reference only to that true faith which is 'counted for righteousness.' They rigidly exclude every Simon Magus who may indeed 'believe and be baptized,' yet has 'no part nor lot in this matter.' *Acts viii. 13. 21.* They only shall be saved who believe *with the heart* unto righteousness. Salvation is restricted to this faith: but it is plain that baptism cannot be so restricted. *Rom. x. 10.*

Indeed the words of institution carry no command that they only should be baptized who so believe, or that the rite should be denied to those whose faith is more superficial; and when we examine Holy Scripture with a view to light upon this point, we discover the fact that many disciples were admitted in our Lord's own time, and with His sanction, to baptism whose faith was anything but deep and real (though probably as far as it went it was sincere), and who by-and-by took offence and 'went back and walked no more with Him.' *John vi. 66.*

This in itself is enough to establish the pro-

priety of admitting to baptism those whose faith is not of the higher order.

If there be faith, however weak, however shallow, if it be only sincere, let it be avowed, let it be declared, for the very purpose that it may be strengthened and deepened, that the 'smoking flax may not be quenched, nor the bruised reed broken.' Matt. xii. 20.

Feigned, insincere faith may indeed be professed in baptism, but the professor will, in course of time, prove himself to be one of those false brethren who 'creep in unawares,' 'grievous wolves,' not sheep, who enter the fold, but 'come in privily,' their entrance due to the fact that the administrator of baptism takes their faith to be real, when it is but feigned; and, as it is not his business to judge, he is not to be held responsible for the consequences. Jude iv.  
Acts xx. 29.  
Gal. ii. 4.

But certainly let 'unfeigned faith,' however weak and shallow, be proclaimed in baptism.

## VIII

THIS admission of those whose faith is weak into the body of the visible Church by baptism explains many a Scripture which asserts the mixed composition of the Church.

All have faith in some degree (save those that enter in hypocritically), but not all have saving, that is, regenerating, faith.

It is true the Apostle tells the Galatian Christians that they are 'all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus'—words which, isolated from Gal. iii. 26.

the context (the enemy's pet device), might seem to declare that all had regenerating faith.

But we must be careful how we interpret this text.

It must be borne in mind that the subject treated of in the context is the different status of the believer in Christ from that of the disciple of Moses. The position under the Gospel is that of *children*, under the law of *servants*, or at all events of children under age.

Gal. v. 6.

The Galatian converts are here affectionately reminded that the glorious privileges of full sonship appertain to all those who believe the Gospel, it being assumed that their faith is none other than that which is described a little further on in the same Epistle as the 'faith which worketh by love.'

Not all, therefore, who belong to the outward visible Church have living, justifying, saving faith; yet all have some faith.

## IX

MANY of our Lord's parables find their explanation in the application of this principle.

In the parable of the draw-net the good and the bad fish are both enclosed in the same net—the visible Church—and there remain until the final separation of the good and the evil.

In the parable of the marriage supper the king's servants, going out into the highways, gather together all, as many as they find, *both bad and good*.

In the parable of the vine and the branches some of the branches are found fruitful, some unfruitful; the difference between the good and the bad, the fruitful and the unfruitful, is not in the possession or non-possession of faith, for all have some, but in the quality of the faith proving sometimes permanent, sometimes evanescent.

The possession of an inferior quality of faith by those members of the visible Church who ultimately perish is distinctly implied in the words of Christ recorded in Matt. vii. 21, 23: 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.'

Those who prophesied in Christ's name, cast out devils, and did many wonderful works must have had faith, but if the Lord 'never knew' them they could not have been regenerate; however great their faith, its *quality* was defective, it never reached their hearts, or influenced their moral character.

The possible dissociation of faith from that high Christian morality, which ought to accompany it, may be even more clearly seen in 1 Cor. xiii. 2, where the case is put of having 'all faith so as to remove mountains,' and at the same time being

of the conversion, *sincerity* should, if possible, be proved ; but to refuse baptism, until unmistakable signs of regenerating grace are developed, is a course warranted neither by Scripture nor by the practice of the Apostles themselves.

## DIGRESSION CONCERNING INFANT BAPTISM

### XI

THIS view of baptism—that it was intended to be, what in fact it has always been, a line of demarcation separating the visible Church of Christ from professed idolators or Jews—will be seen upon a little consideration, and so much the more as it is the more considered, to make it right, reasonable, and proper to baptize infants.

Let this matter be now examined.

Infants, it is true, are themselves personally unable to believe, and this has appeared to many persons an insuperable objection to their baptism.

We should be the first to admit that faith and baptism cannot be sundered.

One main object of this treatise is to emphasize a connection which Scripture so invariably teaches.

But the remarks which follow will show that infant baptism is strictly in accordance with this principle.

In the first place, it has to be remembered that at all events *little children* are capable of believing. Of this there is no doubt, our Saviour Himself being



witness : ‘ Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me.’ Little ones, therefore, may have and do have faith, and should be baptized that they may be shown to be not heathen ‘ without,’ but numbered with the people of God ‘ within.’ Look also at the words of institution : ‘ Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them ’—that is, make disciples of all nations by baptizing them. Every baptized person becomes a disciple, a learner, in Christ’s school.

Matt. xviii. 13-14.

Who, then, shall say *how soon* the spirit of man may begin to learn ? or, which is the same thing, *how soon* the spirit of God may begin to teach ? ‘ Whom shall He teach knowledge ? ’ the prophet asks, ‘ and whom shall He make to understand doctrine ? ’ Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.’

Isa. xxviii. 9.

Surely it is desirable that no time should be lost, that not even a year’s advantage should be given to Satan for instruction in evil.

We have our infant schools where children under three years of age attend, in order that from the earliest dawn of intelligence their faculties may be directed and developed, and shall not the little children of whom the Master said ‘ Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ’ be brought unto Christ that they may learn of Him ? Is it not a recognized right of parents that they may send their children to whatever school they please, and give directions as to what they shall be taught there ? and may they not therefore put their little

Mark x. 14.

ones into *Christ's* school in the way appointed, that is by baptism, that they may have the benefit of the Spirit's teaching ? for it was the Spirit of Christ which spake of old, saying, 'Come, ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.'

Ps. xxxiv.  
11.

## XII

✓ YET these remarks, it is confessed, do not touch the case of *infants* ; though it is difficult to assign an age when faith is first possible, and, therefore, when baptism as an expression of personal faith might be administered. To come to this point ; let it first be observed that in that great type of Christian baptism, the passage of the children of Israel through the Red Sea, *infants* were 'baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea,' quite as much as adult Israelites, and it is to be noted that the people were dissatisfied with the permission, 'Go now ye that are *men* and serve the Lord' : when Pharaoh refused, saying, 'Let the Lord be so with you if I will let you go and your little ones, look to it for evil is before you,' then Moses objected, rightly considering that God's word, 'Let my people go that they may serve me,' included the little ones.

1 Cor. x. 2.

Exod. x. 11.

With this type before him what believer in the Lord Jesus Christ just escaped from the bondage of heathenism or Judaism would be content to go out *without his little ones* ? If Israel refused to leave his little ones behind in the land of the tyrant, why should a Christian parent be obliged to leave his

children heathen when he becomes a Christian, they remaining *without* whilst he is *within*? Has not every father the right, nay, is it not every father's duty, like Abraham, to command his children and his household after him, and to say with Joshua, 'as for me and *my house*, we will serve the Lord?' Is not this the simple explanation of what we read in the Acts of the Apostles that households were baptized, evidently upon the faith of the head of the household?

Gen. xviii.  
19.

Josh. xxiv.  
15.

### XIII

BUT further, the baptism of the infant is a fresh declaration of the parent's belief.

The infant is a part of the parent, and as such is baptized with him.

The parent who brings his child to be baptized ratifies his own baptism, and declares over again in his child the faith which he has already avowed in his own person.

And Christian parents—let us still keep our minds directed towards the mission field, all along the great circumference where Christianity comes in contact with other religions—Christian parents, not willing that their children should be otherwise than Christian, hasten to bring them into Christ's fold, commanding them to be baptized in the name of the same Lord.

Nay, one may even be more bold, and say that one chief reason why the children of *believing* parents should be baptized is the fact that they are already

Isa. xlii. 3.

in covenant with God through their parents, as it is written, 'I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring.'

This principle constitutes the point of the Apostle's argument in 1 Cor. vii. 14.

He is showing that the believing husband need not separate himself from the still unbelieving wife, on the ground of her being unsanctified, for she was sanctified through him, *i.e.* in virtue of her being one flesh with him.

Nor need the Christian wife refuse to live any longer with her heathen husband, for he in the same manner was sanctified through her.

In order to convince them of this he adduces the case of their children—about them there existed no doubt; the fact that they brought them to baptism making it evident that they regarded them as under the covenant through the one Christian parent.

Extend, then, the Apostle would say, this principle to your consorts, who are just as much your own flesh as your children, and you will see that they need not be avoided as unsanctified.

Hence we see that the children have a right to baptism, if only one of their parents be Christian.

Of course, as they grow up, such children will hear nothing of any other Father of spirits than the true God, of any other Saviour than the Lord Jesus Christ, or of any other Comforter than the Holy Ghost; so that as soon as ever they begin to think at all, they cannot choose but believe in some

degree upon God and Christ ; why then should they not receive the sign of the covenant ? It has already been shown that to wait for the development of the highest form of faith is on every account to be avoided.

Let the infants therefore have the outward sign of an incorporation which of right belongs to them.

#### XIV

AND does not the whole tenor of Scripture favour this view ?

Let those who are stumbled by the fact that there is no specific mention in the New Testament of an infant's baptism, remember that neither is there any instance of a child of Christian parents whose baptism was deferred until adolescence.

Had any such postponement been customary, would not some allusion to this important matter have fallen from St. Paul's pen when prescribing the duties of fathers towards their children ? Would it have sufficed to bid them bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ? Would it not have been necessary to give some plain directions as to when their children should be baptized ? Ephes. vi. 4.

And is not the presumption very strong that the children, who are evidently addressed as already within the fold, had been baptized ? Ephes. vi. 1.

Indeed, if not baptized, when so addressed, and their fathers so instructed, it would be fair to argue that St. Paul saw no necessity for them to be bap-

tized at all; but, if baptized, when, if not as infants?

In other words St. Paul's language here accords exactly with the supposition that the children had been baptized at some previous time, and does not at all accord with the supposition that they would be, or ought to be, enrolled at some future time as Christians by baptism.

## XV

THE case of Jewish converts points more strongly still to the propriety of infant baptism. When a Jew is baptized his baptism has a twofold import; firstly, he therein and thereby acknowledges the crucified Jesus of Nazareth to be the Son of God, the promised Messiah, and Saviour of the world; secondly, and as a consequence, he therein and thereby renounces all dependence upon the Law for Justification, and bases all his hopes of acceptance with God upon the merits of Christ's obedience, and the sufficiency of Christ's atonement; he exchanges the old covenant for the new; he repents, ceases from dead works, and trusts to grace only. All this is involved in and signified by his baptism. He must see and acknowledge all this, or he has no right to be baptized.

But then the question arises, may he not bring

Acts xvi. 33. 'all his' with him?

Was he not taught under the old covenant to do so, being commanded to circumcise his male children

when eight days old? and remembering how, when all Israel were on the borders of the promised land, not only their captains, elders, and officers, but their wives and *little ones* stood before the Lord to enter into the covenant with him, and into the oath; remembering all this would he be likely to esteem the new a better covenant if his children appeared to be excluded from participation in it? for the denial of baptism to his little ones would certainly have this *appearance*, and make it hard for him to understand Christ's word which He spake, saying, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.'

Deut. xxix.  
11.

Matt. v. 17

And, indeed, how much more should infants be admitted into the covenant of grace than into the covenant of works, seeing they are not capable of keeping the law, but are capable of receiving grace. Therefore if infants under the law are circumcised, much more under the Gospel should they be baptized.

## XVI

THE baptism of infants is also in harmony with the truth so often, and in so many ways brought out to view in Holy Scripture, viz. : that the faith of one member brings a blessing upon the whole family.

Remember Rahab and what is said of her: 'And the city shall be accursed, even it and all that are therein to the Lord; only Rahab the harlot shall live *and all that are with her in the house*, because *she hid the messengers which we sent.*'

Josh. vi. 17.



piety. Not only was such a course unmeaning, it was in direct opposition to the very terms in which this sacrament was incorporated with the missionary command, ‘Go ye therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them, *teaching them.*’ What is the good of making disciples of those who will never be taught? What is the use of baptism, especially for infants, except it be followed, according to the Master’s injunction, by teaching?

And let it not be said that such children so baptized, and because baptized, will be taught by the Holy Ghost. The command is to those who baptize to teach, or cause to be taught, not to leave the teaching to the Holy Ghost. If *we* teach, the Holy Ghost will also teach, no doubt, but there is no reason to assume that He otherwise will.

MAIN SUBJECT RESUMED; RELATION OF  
BAPTISM TO REPENTANCE

XVIII

HAVING now explained the meaning of baptism as applied to infants, and shown, as we trust, its Scriptural basis, we will now return to the main subject from which we digressed.

We have traced and dwelt at some length upon the connection of baptism with faith—a connection

which will appear in a still clearer light as we advance and examine more closely the purposes for which baptism was instituted. Something ought now to be said concerning the relation of baptism to repentance; in fact, strictly speaking, this should have come first according to the order of Scripture; but its connection with faith is more conspicuous, and meets us more repeatedly in Holy Writ, and so claims prior notice; but this must not make us overlook the relation in which baptism stands to repentance, for it is important.

“Repentance and faith are almost as intimately connected as faith and baptism.

Repentance springs from faith and leads to faith. There cannot be repentance without some degree of faith, nor will that faith grow without repentance.

Thus faith takes its tone from repentance.

The deeper the repentance the more real the faith.

Repentance did not end with the baptism of John.

‘Repent ye, and believe the Gospel’ was the Mark i. 15.  
burden of our Lord’s preaching.

‘Repent and be baptized.’ ‘Repent ye there- Acts ii. 38.  
fore and be converted’ (*i.e.* turn to God), are only Acts iii. 19.  
variations of the same theme.

Repentance is transition from one mind to another; it may be temporary or permanent; this will depend upon the depth of the emotion.

Repentance has chiefly to do with the past,  
 Matt. ix. 13. either past conduct and life, as 'I came not to call  
 the righteous but sinners to repentance;' or with  
 a past religious creed, as when we read of 'repent-  
 Heb. vi. 1. ance from dead works' as one of the 'first prin-  
 ciples of the doctrine of Christ.' Christian baptism  
 embodies both.

It proclaims an equal determination to turn  
 from dumb idols, or from any false religion, or  
 from the Mosaic law as having power to justify,  
*and* from the sinful ways of an ungodly life.

'It repents me,' the Hindoo will say, 'of having  
 so long vainly worshipped Ram, and tried to con-  
 ciliate Doorga; henceforth I will love and obey the  
 Lord Jesus Christ'—and to prove his words he  
 comes forward to be baptized.

'It repents me,' the enlightened Mahomedan  
 will say, 'of having so long allowed myself to be  
 guided by one whose claim to be a prophet I now  
 deny; henceforth Mahomet shall be forgotten and  
 Christ adored'—and to prove the reality of his con-  
 viction he asks to be baptized.

'It repents me,' the Jew will say, 'of having so  
 long rejected Jesus of Nazareth, and sought to be  
 justified by the law of Moses; henceforth I have  
 done with the law for righteousness. Jesus is my  
 righteousness and my Messiah'—and to show that  
 he is in earnest he seeks baptism.

‘It repents me,’ each or any one of these may say, ‘of having so long made provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof; henceforth by God’s grace I will crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts and walk in newness of life’—and in baptism he will seek to proclaim his changed views.

All this is repentance—baptism is its expression and its seal.

CONCLUSION CONCERNING THE PRIMARY  
INTENTION OF BAPTISM

XIX

WE are now in a position to understand at all events the primary intention and use of baptism.

By its operation a community is gathered out of the heathen or Jewish world, standing out in clear and definite separation from and contradistinction to it.

This separation, however, is more manifest in regard to articles of belief than in respect of actual purity of life.

The distinction in regard to morality ought to be far more marked than it is; but for this something more than baptism is needed.

This community so gathered out bears various names and appellations in Holy Writ.

Thus we read ‘God did visit the Gentiles to take Acts xv. 14.

out of them a people for His name.' This 'people for His name' is the community of the baptized, most commonly called the Church (*ἐκκλησία*) because  
 1 Tim. iii. 15. 'called out.' Elsewhere it is denominated the  
 2 Cor. vi. 16. 'house' or 'temple of God,' because God by His Spirit dwells in it. It is not only called but *is* in a mystical sense (that is, in a manner we cannot understand) the  
 Ephes. i. 23. 'Body of Christ.' Hence every baptized person is said to be *in* Christ. The expression used by St. Paul 'The churches of Judæa which were in Christ,' is a term  
 Gal. i. 22. evidently intended to comprehend every individual member of those communities. The churches were, and the several members of the churches were, *in* Christ.

They were so by baptism—it being understood that baptism stands for faith. It being just as true—indeed more absolutely true—that they were 'in Christ' by faith in Him.

So when St. Paul speaks of his kinsmen and  
 Rom. xvi. 7. fellow-prisoners, Andronicus and Junia, who were in Christ before him, he simply means that their baptism preceded his.

The most definite meaning which we are able to attach to the words 'in Christ' as applied to all baptized persons is that they belong to the number of those who, either in their own persons, if adults, or through their parents, if infants, have publicly declared their acceptance of the doctrine of Christ,  
 Rom. vi. 17. whether they 'have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered' them or not ;

and this we say because to 'abide in Christ' and to 'abide in the doctrine of Christ' would seem to be synonymous terms. John xv. 4.  
2 John 9.

Therefore the baptized are *within*, the unbaptized *without*, this community.

The baptized form this Church, this sheep-fold, this house or temple, this Body of Christ. And baptism has the effect, was intended to have the effect, and always has had the effect, of forming, defining, and limiting this organization.

This is the primary use and first practical application of baptism, without which no efficient missionary operations could be prosecuted.

#### IMPORTANT DIGRESSION; INQUIRY AS TO THE PERMANENCE OF REGENERATION

### XX

BEFORE proceeding to describe its other uses, which are many and important, a point calls for consideration which may most fitly be introduced here, viz. :—

'Is the position which faith accompanied by baptism gives to be regarded in every case as regeneration?'

Of course the answer to this question *may* be in the affirmative if regeneration is a change which often proves transient and abortive, but *must* be in

the negative if regeneration is a spiritual change of a permanent and final character.

This therefore is the real point at issue. 'Is regeneration a permanent work, or does it often prove abortive?'

It being granted—and who disputes it?—that regeneration and baptism are closely connected, it is evident that to magnify regeneration is to exalt baptism, and, *vice versâ*, to depreciate the one is to degrade the other. Nor is this estimate altered if in the one case the *few*, in the other *all*, are partakers of the benefit. The limited bestowal of the greater blessing puts more honour upon the Sacrament than the universal bestowal of the lesser; especially as it by no means follows that those who fail to attain the greater are left destitute of grace altogether.

## XXI

BUT what is regeneration? Let us define it, or rather extract from Scripture words which have a similar meaning, and place the matter in various lights.

John v. 24.

Regeneration is a 'passing from death unto life,' and therefore from carnal-mindedness, which is death, to spiritual-mindedness, which is life; and since the 'carnal mind is enmity against God,' it is therefore a passing from enmity to friendship, *i.e.* it is reconciliation to God. Hence it is a

Rom. viii. 6,  
7.

Rom. v. 10.



passing from a state of condemnation on account of alienation to a state of acceptance because of reconciliation ; it therefore embraces justification.

Moreover, the regenerate are described as Begotten of God the Father, Created in Christ Jesus, and Born of the Spirit.

1 John v. 1.  
Ephes. ii. 10.  
John iii. 8.

Regeneration also includes conversion ; but these two things should be carefully discriminated.

Regeneration is a vital change consequent upon the act of God, who ‘quickeneth.’

Conversion is the act of man who *turns* from dumb idols to serve the living God, or from paths of sin to a better life.

In relation to man, regeneration is passive, conversion active. Hence the term conversion can only be applied to those who are old enough to judge and act for themselves ; whereas regeneration *may* take place in those who are unconscious of the operation of God’s Spirit.

Such, then, is regeneration—with which are inseparably connected, as parts of the whole, life, reconciliation, justification, and conversion ; of these conversion only can exist, in a weak form, independently of regeneration. Many turn to the Lord who afterwards go back ; but regeneration, when it occurs in adults, is invariably accompanied by true conversion.

## XXII

THIS, then, is the great question before us—by no means easy to answer, viz., ‘Whether regeneration is a permanent change, or whether it may and often does prove transient.’

Naturally, one would be sorry to be obliged to think that eternal life can be communicated to the soul and lost again, and Death resume its awful sway; that reconciliation with God can be effected, and after a while the old enmity return in full force; that a man may be justified, that is, ‘delivered from the curse of the law,’ and again through sin come into condemnation.

It would be painful indeed to have to believe this, but we hope to be able to adduce sufficient reasons from the Scriptures to show that we are not obliged so to think.

## XXIII

FIRST, let us take into consideration our Lord’s words in Matt. xix. 28, ‘Ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of His glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’

This regeneration time here spoken of is the same as the ‘times of refreshing’ and ‘times of restitution of all things’ spoken of by St. Peter; of which times we are told ‘God hath spoken by the

mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.' Therefore Ezekiel spoke of them, and where more clearly than in chapters xxxvi. and xxxvii. of his prophecy?

'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.'

Ezek. xxxvi.  
25, 26.

Of these two verses the former speaks of the 'washing of regeneration,' the latter of the 'renewing of the Holy Ghost,' and by this combination the salvation, the permanent salvation, of Israel, is accomplished.

See Titus  
iii. 5.

That this regeneration and its effects will not be temporary or abortive, but permanent, we learn from passages in chapter xxxvii.

V. 22. 'Neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms *any more*.'

V. 23. 'Neither shall they defile themselves *any more* with their idols.'

V. 25. 'And they shall dwell in the land which I have given unto Jacob, My servant . . . even they, and their children, and their children's children *for ever*, and My servant David shall be their prince *for ever*.'

V. 26. 'Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an *everlasting* covenant with them, and I will place them and multiply

them, and will set My sanctuary in the midst of them *for evermore.*'

How conclusive this language! At all events *this* 'washing of regeneration' and 'renewing of the Holy Ghost' will not prove transient and abortive.

The national regeneration of Israel here predicted will be permanent and final. This affords a strong presumption that the spiritual regeneration of the spiritual Israel will be equally permanent and equally final.

## XXIV

OUR Lord's reference to these chapters in His conversation with Nicodemus is very striking, and is an interesting illustration of the parallelism existing between the spiritual and the literal in the interpretation of prophecy.

John iii. 3.

Christ merely epitomized the teaching of these two chapters when He said (somewhat enigmatically it must be confessed) to Nicodemus, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' This new birth is the regeneration described in Ezekiel xxxvi.; without this no man can see or partake of the kingdom described in chapter xxxvii.

Nicodemus, however, though a master (*i.e.* a teacher) of Israel, did not perceive the allusion.

John iii. 5.

Christ then helped him by mentioning the Spirit: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit.' Still Nicodemus failed to understand.

Then another hint was given. Our Lord's words, 'The wind bloweth where it listeth . . . so

is every one that is born of the Spirit,' ought to have reminded Nicodemus of the words, 'Prophecy unto the *wind*, prophecy, Son of Man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.' But no. The only answer was, 'How can these things be?'

Ezek.  
xxxvii. 9.

Hence the well-merited rebuke, 'Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?'

Nicodemus does not appear to have known the literal and primary interpretation of the prophecy foretelling the earthly millennial restoration and exaltation of the reunited houses of Judah and Israel; not knowing this, of course, he failed to see the underlying truth concerning the spiritual regeneration of the spiritual Israel—a necessary preliminary to seeing and entering the spiritual kingdom which Jesus was then inaugurating.

Hence it was said to him, and to all sharing his blindness, 'If I have told you of earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?'

John iii. 12.  
See also  
John v. 47.

Thus we see how Ezekiel xxxvi., xxxvii., Matt. xix. 28, John iii. 3-12, Acts iii. 19, 21, and Titus iii. 5, are all passages intimately connected with each other.

They not only help us to understand the full meaning of the word 'regeneration,' but also tend to show that it is as permanent in its spiritual as in its national acceptance.

## XXV

BEFORE turning to the New Testament for evidence of the permanence of regeneration, a very important argument is to be derived from Psalm lxxxix.

David could not understand the apparent failure of the 'sure mercies' promised to him in a vision (v. 19).

*We* fully understand: we know that the David anointed with the holy oil is the *Christ* 'in whom all the promises of God are Yea and in Him Amen.' Now vv. 29 to 38 of this Psalm deal with one special point, viz., the seed promised to the Christ.

What is this seed but those who are begotten of God, created in Christ Jesus, and born of the Spirit—the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus—the regenerate?

Twice over (vv. 29, 36) the solemn assurance is given concerning this seed that it shall *endure for ever*.

But what if they forsake God's law and walk not in His judgments? What if they break God's statutes and keep not His commandments?

Will not *sin* be able to 'separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus'?

No! This contingency is provided for in the 'Covenant ordered in all things and sure.'

Under these circumstances remedial chastisements are applied. God visits their transgressions with the rod and their iniquities with stripes (v. 32). These judgments come upon them, as St. Paul

Rom. viii.  
39.

2 Sam. xxiii.  
5.

puts it, that they may not be 'condemned with the world.' 1 Cor. xi, 32.

It is in this very respect that the new covenant so much excels the old. The *fault* of the old was that those who received it '*continued not* in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.' Heb. viii. 9.

This fault, therefore, is remedied in the new.

The same truth, though altogether obscured in the Authorized Version, is clearly taught in Isaiah liii., where, in respect to the same promise made to the same blessed Saviour of men, are these words (v. 10) :

'He shall see His seed, it (the seed) shall prolong its days (*i.e.* shall endure for ever, shall never perish), and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands.' What this 'pleasure of the Lord' is may be gathered from another place where it is written, 'I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God.'<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xviii. 32.

## XXVI

TURNING now to the New Testament, passages are found, especially in St. John's Epistles, exactly in harmony with the teaching of the Old Testament on this subject.

Three times over is the same positive assertion made, in terms slightly varying.

<sup>1</sup> The Septuagint translators evidently took this view of the passage, rendering it by σπέρμα μακρόβιον.



1 John iii. 9. 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.'

1 John v. 4. 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world.'

1 John v. 18. 'We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, and that wicked one toucheth him not.'<sup>1</sup>

The force of these verses is materially heightened by others whose meaning is similar, *e.g.* 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would have continued with us.'

1 John ii. 19.

'But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you ye shall abide in Him.'

'Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.'

<sup>1</sup> 'Cannot sin,' 'sinneth not.' The meaning depends upon the difference between the two tenses *ἁμαρτεῖν* and *ἁμαρτάνειν*. The former signifies those sporadic acts of sin from which none, even the holiest, are free, as we are so distinctly taught in this Epistle; the latter signifies that habitual constant sinning from which the regenerate are saved—indeed, if they were not so saved how would they be saved at all from their sins? The contrast between *ἁμαρτεῖν* and *ἁμαρτάνειν* is very clearly seen by comparing Lev. iv. 2, *ψυχὴ ἐὰν ἀκουσίως ἁμάρτη* with Heb. x. 26, *ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν*; it is from this latter, viz., sinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, that the regenerate man is saved.

If regeneration is a permanent change, these Scriptures need no special explanation, but if it is not permanent, one must resort to some kind of interpretation which will explain away their obvious meaning. This can be done and has been done over and over again, but it is not satisfactory to those who are anxious to avoid corrupting the word of God.<sup>1</sup>

## XXVII

AGAIN, we may adduce in proof of the permanence of regeneration those texts which connect perseverance unto the end with the profession of faith in such a way as to imply that where there is not perseverance it is because there has been no regeneration. Such are, 'If ye continue in My word then are ye My disciples indeed.' Many by faith and baptism are added to the Church, who, by afterwards departing from the faith, prove that they never were disciples *indeed*, *i.e.* truly (*ἀληθῶς*).

John viii.  
31.

'We are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.' So that if we 'cast away our confidence,' *i.e.* are 'moved away from the hope of the Gospel,' we make it evident that we were never so made par-

Heb. iii. 14.

Heb. x. 35.

Col. i. 23.

<sup>1</sup> One way to do this is to assert that the perfect participle γεγεννημένος expresses conditional continuance, *i.e.* as long as he continues born of God. But is it not entirely in accordance with Greek idiom to say that this tense is used on purpose to show that there *is*, and *has been*, continuance?

takers of Christ as to be regenerated by His quickening Spirit.

1 John iii. 6.

‘Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not, whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him,’ *i.e.* whosoever lives in habitual sin (*ἁμαρτάνει* not *ἡμαρτε*) never was regenerate, or he would have seen and known God at some time or other.

## XXVIII

LASTLY there are numerous passages and texts which point with more or less directness and distinctness to the permanence of regeneration, adding greatly to the general argument in favour of this view.

Let us briefly consider some few of these, first remarking that the preservation and perseverance of regenerated saints stand related to each other much in the same way that regeneration and conversion do. Preservation is God’s act, perseverance is man’s. The one is divine, the other human. The one passive, the other active. Far more is said in Scripture about the preservation than about the perseverance of the saints.

(i.) Let us turn to John x. 27–9: ‘My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them

Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand.'

Concerning these most precious words it only needs to be observed that in the sheep, known of Jesus, and given Him by the Father, we have a description of the regenerate (the *seed* of Psalm lxxxix. and Isaiah liii.). These never perish because 'kept by the power of God unto salvation.'

(ii.) Rom. v. 10 : 'If when we were enemies we were reconciled unto God by the death of His son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by His Life.'

Wonderful and blessed reasoning !

Those reconciled to God by the death of His Son are, and can only be, the regenerate ; for what is reconciliation but that change of heart to Godward which fulfils the blessed promise, 'A new heart also will I give you' ? Now, the saving of the reconciled by Christ's life must be easier than the reconciliation of enemies by His death, and if the more difficult thing has been accomplished, *much more* will the easier be.

This expression 'much more,' of which St. Paul is so fond, occurs again in vv. 15 and 17. These two verses are very similar in general construction and meaning, which would appear to be as follows :—

By the trespass of one (that is, Adam) Death reigned through him ; but the reign of Death was not so absolute but that its power has been wrested

away from it, and itself must be finally vanquished. But those who reign in life through Jesus Christ

Heb. xii. 28. 'receive a kingdom which *cannot be moved*'; theirs

Heb. vii. 16. is 'the power of an endless life' which cannot be taken away from them. Christ's victory is therefore greater than Death's because it can *never be reversed*.

(iii.) Ephes. i. 13, 14: 'In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession.' Of course the Holy Spirit of Promise is the Holy Spirit promised in Ezekiel xxxvi., 'I will put My Spirit *within* you.' The reference is not to those gifts of the Spirit enumerated in 1 Cor. xii., which might be, and often were, communicated without touching the inner life, but to that indwelling Spirit which distinguishes the regenerate from the unregenerate.

The idea of permanence is contained in the word *sealed*. A seal is for *security*: 'So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.' It is also for *finality*: 'And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.'

Dan. vi. 17.

(iv.) Col. iii. 3: 'Your life is hid with Christ in God.' Is not this the secret of the preservation of

the regenerate? Their life is indestructible because hid with Christ in God.

The above are a few out of many Scripture texts and arguments which tend to show, to some indeed convincingly, but not to all, that the great change which passes over men when they believe in their heart that Jesus is the Lord, and that God hath raised Him from the dead, is not temporary, but permanent—never abortive, but always issuing in the salvation of the soul.

## XXIX

MANY wise and good persons are hindered from thus thinking because of certain Scriptures which seem to point to an opposite conclusion. A consideration of some of these passages will therefore be expected by those who experience this difficulty.

Heb. vi. 1-8 is one of these.

Now, it is not to be denied that the persons here spoken of are persons who receive grace and lose it; are enlightened (a distinct reference to baptism), but walk not in the light; are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, *i.e.* are convinced by Him of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, but their convictions are unfruitful. They are recipients of Spiritual gifts to profit withal, but they do not profit by them. They taste the good word of God—anon with joy, perhaps, receiving it—but by and by they are offended.

John xvi. 8.

1 Cor. xii. 7.

Matt. xiii.  
20, 21.

But are such persons so described necessarily to be accounted regenerate?

Surely vv. 7 and 8 plainly indicate that they are not.

They are compared to land which, in spite of plenteous fertilizing showers, bringeth forth thorns and briars. Such land must have been very 'naughty' all along. The very fact that the persons so described could receive such grace in vain is the best proof which could be given that they were never regenerate, seeing that 'a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.'

Matt. vii. 18.

Next we turn to 2 Peter ii. 20: 'For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.'

It might be said with a show of reason that the possession of the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ marks out these persons here referred to as regenerate (see John xvii. 3), especially seeing that this knowledge is accompanied by an escape from pollution suggesting and implying a *washing*.

But this washing, if it were the washing of regeneration, would hardly be compared to a *sow's* washing, so soon followed, and so certain to be followed, by another wallowing in the mire. Regenerate people are not found compared to dogs



and swine in God's Word; rather must the temporary cleansing be taken as similar to that described by our Lord in Matt. xii. 42. The 'sweeping' and 'garnishing' there spoken of is not the work of the Spirit, or the house would not have been found empty on the return of the unclean spirit. And the parallelism of the two passages is strikingly evidenced by the remarkable similarity of the language, the words, 'The last state of that man is worse than the first,' answering to the words, 'The latter end is worse with them than the beginning'; as though St. Peter, in describing the case, recalled our Saviour's words as exactly applicable.

Our Saviour's Parable of the Vine and the Branches is also quoted to show how those that are grafted into Christ may fall away and perish; and rightly so, for such is the plain teaching of the parable.

John xv.  
1-6.

But are we not justified in holding that between a branch which bears fruit and one which does not there is the same difference as between two classes of hearers in the Parable of the Sower, one of which 'brings forth fruit with patience' and another is 'scorched and withers away'? Those who 'endure for a time' are said to have 'no root in themselves,' which must be interpreted in accordance with other Scriptures to mean they have not 'eternal life abiding in them,' and this is the reason why they fall away.

1 John iii.  
15.

One passage in the Old Testament claims attention, viz., Ezekiel xviii. 24: 'When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.'

Now, if by the righteous man here spoken of we are to understand a regenerate man in the New Testament sense, we are driven to the conclusion that he may ultimately perish; unless, indeed, we adopt the somewhat questionable expedient of asserting that the sentence is purely hypothetical, introduced merely for the sake of illustrating the exact balancing of God's ways.

We do not say that imaginary hypotheses are not sometimes propounded in God's word, but we should be sorry to build an argument upon such a foundation.

We would rather take our stand upon the difference between the two covenants which has been adverted to, and conclude from it that we cannot *always* argue from what is said of the 'righteous' under the old covenant as to what we are to believe concerning the regenerate under the new.

We are not contending that the 'righteous' under the Law of Moses did not sometimes fall away, but that the regenerate under the Gospel do not.

### XXX

BUT in addition to passages such as these there are others sometimes held to prove that all the baptized are regenerate, in which case, of course, the change would often be of a very weak and transitory kind—the opposite of that which we are endeavouring to prove.

Such, for instance, is Gal. iii. 26, 27 :

‘ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.’

— In interpreting this portion of Scripture we are obliged to take into consideration the various degrees and qualities of faith, because if *all* faith regenerates and makes us children of God, then are all the baptized regenerate ; but it is written, ‘ *with the heart* man believeth unto righteousness’ ; and as all faith is not with the heart, all faith does not make us children of God, but only a certain degree and quality of faith. Rom. x. 10.

The distinction between a spurious and cordial faith is very marked in the words Jesus addressed to His disciples (who all, of course, had some faith, or they would not have been baptized) : ‘ There are some of you that believe not ’—as much as to say, ‘ you profess to believe, and perhaps you think you do ; but I know your hearts, and know that some of you do not really believe.’ John vi. 64.

We learnt from the same text that Judas Iscariot was one of these.

But what is the meaning of the words, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ'? Does this mean that all the baptized are regenerate?

Rom. xiii.  
14.

To have put on Christ cannot mean to have been regenerated, because if so St. Paul must be understood in writing to the Romans to exhort them to be regenerate when he bids them 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ.' St. Paul never calls upon his converts in any of his epistles to be regenerate; there is nothing remarkable in this, because, as has been already explained, regeneration is always attributed to God, being a Divine work done in and upon us, but what *is* remarkable is that St. Paul never calls upon his converts to repent, or turn to God, which, being man's part and duty, we should perhaps have expected to find in addresses to a mixed community like the Church.<sup>1</sup>

### XXXI

BUT this opens up an important subject which will flow naturally from a consideration of 2 Cor. v. 17, 'Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'

This is a difficult text to understand. It is

<sup>1</sup> This is in marked contrast to the epistles addressed by our Lord to the seven Churches of Asia in the Apocalypse. *There* the exhortation is to repent, and why? Because Jesus knew their hearts, and could speak as one who knew.

necessary to take it in close connection with the preceding verses, with which it may thus be paraphrased.

Because we thus judge that if one (*i.e.* Christ) died the death which all men deserve, and died for them, then all men without exception died in and with Him, that is, the debt of every man's sin is paid, and we may offer pardon to all, making no difference. Moreover we judge that He died for all men, that those who obtain life through His death (not indeed all, for all will not accept the gift of life—but those who through believing in Him are quickened together with Him), may no longer live as they did before; but constrained by His extraordinary love, may cease from a life of self-seeking and live a new life by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them.

This being so, we, true apostles and faithful ministers of the Gospel, having due regard to the intent with which Christ died, do not address any of you, or speak, or think of any of you, as if you were still in that state of spiritual death in which you were before you became Christians. Yea, just as we think differently of Christ Himself now that He is risen, ascended, and glorified, from what we did when he was amongst us in the 'form of a servant,' so do we think differently of all you who by baptism put on Christ. We think of you and address you as believers, as saints, as children of God; now and henceforth, whoever is in Christ, we make no distinction, *to us* he is a new

creature ; old things are passed away, all things are become new.

This exposition of a difficult passage may, or may not commend itself to the reader, but the fact remains that St. Paul in all his epistles does address his converts as saints, as believers, as brethren, and as children of God.

### XXXII

NOR is it surprising that this patent and indisputable fact should have led many to think that all so addressed really and truly were begotten of God, created in Christ Jesus, and born of the Spirit.

But this, we venture to think, is a superficial view of the matter.

It does not at all necessarily follow that because the Apostle always addressed them as saints, declaring them to be ‘ quickened together with Christ,’ and bidding them ‘ reckon’ themselves ‘ to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord,’ that therefore they had all so died, and were all so risen again.

This matter is capable of a simple explanation, which we now offer.

It was a fixed principle with the Apostle always to take men upon their profession, and accept them as being what, in such a solemn rite as baptism, they proclaimed themselves to be.

To this opinion concerning them he steadfastly

Ephes. ii. 5.

Rom. vi. 11.

adhered until, by their continuance in sin, it became perfectly evident that they were *false* brethren.

The word which he uses to denote such persons is a remarkable one—one of which we shall have occasion to speak again—such persons according to the Apostle are ‘reprobate’ (*ἀδόκιμοι*), *i.e.* those who have not been able to stand the test; so showing that they never were what they professed to be. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

It is wonderful how St. Paul adhered to this principle, and how he taught others to do the same.

As for himself, when the conduct of certain Roman Christians was unsatisfactory, he called them ‘weak brethren’; when the Corinthians showed a party spirit he called them ‘babes in Christ’; when some of the Galatian Christians listened fascinated by false teachers he stood ‘in doubt’ of them, finding it difficult to believe that they really knew Christ, yet still he persists in calling them brethren. As for others, he charged the Thessalonians that if they saw any man of their number not obeying his word they were not to count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. Rom. xv. 1. 1 Cor. iii. 1. Gal. iv. 20. 2 Thess. iii. 15.

Now why was all this? Would it not have been better to have told some of these people bluntly that they were not what they professed to be, and to have declared to them (as St. Peter did to Simon Magus) that they had ‘neither part nor lot in this matter,’ for their heart was ‘not right in the sight of the Lord?’ This would have been all very well Acts viii. 21.



if St. Paul had known their hearts ; but he had no means of knowing for certain who did and who did not believe with the heart unto righteousness. Therefore his method was to wait and let every man's character develop itself ; passing no judgment upon any, but leaving each man for the Lord to judge.

For this cause he assumed them to be what they professed to be, but expected them to live accordingly. He gave them credit for being children of the light, for living in the spirit, for being washed, sanctified (in the sense of consecrated), and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God ; for being forgiven (never once urging them to seek forgiveness) ; he gave them credit for all this, simply and solely because they were baptized, *i.e.* because in baptism they had separated themselves from among the heathen, and acknowledged the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1 Thess. v. 5.

1 Cor. vi. 11.

Ephes. iv.  
32.

At the same time he was careful so to delineate the character befitting those that were born of God that they must have felt acutely the inconsistency of their lives when anything was wrong. He warned them solemnly against self-deception, and evermore exhorted them to continue steadfast in the faith, and give to the Church and to the world sure and certain evidence of their regeneration by holiness of life and patient continuance in well-doing.

## XXXIII

HAVING now considered some of the strongest passages generally quoted in favour of the view that those begotten of God, created in Christ Jesus, and born of the Spirit, may and do sometimes perish everlastingly; and that the law of the spirit of life, after having made men free from the law of sin and death, may and does sometimes give place again to the latter; and having made a few explanatory remarks tending to remove the impression that so great a change can ever be transient; and having set before our readers divers considerations deduced from various passages of Scripture which, upon a fair and honest interpretation, seem to establish the doctrine of the permanence of regeneration; we are now able to give a precise answer to the question propounded in paragraph XX., viz.:—

Rom. viii. 2.

Is the position which faith accompanied by baptism gives to be regarded in every case as regeneration?

It having been, we hope, satisfactorily shown that regeneration is a change which never proves transient or abortive, but always permanent, it must follow from this in answer to the above question that

Regeneration is confined to those baptized persons whose own faith, if adults, or whose parents' faith, if infants, has sufficed to obtain so great a benefit.

## XXXIV

THIS conclusion surely accords with the words of St. Paul, 'They are not all Israel which are of Israel,' and is in accord with a very noticeable fact, viz., that we continually meet with descriptions of the children of God which distinguish them, not from the unbaptized heathen without, but from their reputed brethren within.

For instance, Jesus said to His disciples, 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one to another.' But would not their baptism cause all men to know that they were Christ's disciples? Yes, so far as profession goes; but Jesus meant disciples *indeed*. For this something more than baptism is required. This is a distinction between disciple and disciple: 'As for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord God, I judge between cattle and cattle.' A disciple in truth—'an Israelite indeed'—is distinguished from a disciple in name only by love, *i.e.* by love doing the works which make faith perfect. Those disciples whose faith is imperfect, not affecting the heart, 'bring no fruit to perfection.'

So in Rom. viii. 14 we read, 'As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God.'

Are all baptized persons led by the Spirit of God? Clearly not. Therefore the baptized are divisible (not by man, for he is forbidden to attempt

it, but by God) into two classes, viz., those that are, and those that are not, led by the Spirit of God, *i.e.* as this verse shows, into regenerate and unregenerate.

Again, in 1 John iii. 14, are these words, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren.'

This is only another form of our Lord's saying in John xiii. 35, which we have just been considering, but it has an important bearing upon the question before us. It amounts to saying that after the baptismal act of faith there still remains an uncertainty as to whether we are begotten of God, and *proof* is wanting until a likeness to our heavenly Father has been developed in us. Hence we understand St. Paul's anxiety to see 'Christ formed in' his Galatian converts as a necessary confirmation of his hope concerning them. Gal. iv. 19.

In this respect the spiritual birth resembles the natural; likeness to its parent is often obscure in the new-born babe, but it develops as the child grows.

### XXXV

MOREOVER this conclusion at which we have arrived is one which affords great grounds of thankfulness to God on two accounts.

*First*, because it is delightful to think that although the grace of God may be bestowed in vain, may be frustrated, may be turned into lascivious-

1 Cor. xv. 10.  
Gal. ii. 21.  
Jude iv.

Heb. xii. 15.  
Rom. v. 15.

ness, and men may and do 'fail of it'; yet that the 'gift by grace,' *i.e.* regeneration, is something greater; once given it is never taken away, being in fact eternal life abiding in us, and sealing us unto the day of redemption.

*Secondly*, because we can have hope and labour on for the salvation of multitudes now living in open sin, who are (as St. John teaches us) 'of the world,' if we are not obliged to think that they were once 'of God.' There is hope for them if they were never regenerate; but if we must think that God's seed was implanted, but did not remain in them, what hope could we have?

On these grounds then we rejoice that we are not obliged to think that all baptized persons are in their baptism born of the Spirit. We know that in and through their baptism they are all added to the Church, all enclosed in the Gospel net, all grafted into Christ, meaning by 'Christ' the community which bears his name, all are constituted members of His body, but it has yet to be determined which are endued with life eternal, and which not.

### XXXVI

It has perhaps not been sufficiently remembered that there are in reality two stages in generation, and that unless the second and higher stage is reached there is no actual generation.

Gen. ii. 7.

We read concerning our first parent, 'The Lord

God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life, and man became a living Soul.' He existed therefore as inanimate first, and afterwards received the gift of life.

Also cf. Job.  
xxxiii. 4.

We find a similar order of things in the passage concerning the regeneration of Israel already referred to in Ezekiel xxxvii. First, the noise, and the shaking of the dry bones, and the coming together bone to his bone, and the sinews and the flesh coming up upon them, and the skin covering them above ; all this answering to the *formation* of Adam out of the dust of the ground.

Then, secondly, in answer to the prayer, 'O breath, breathe upon these slain that they may live,' the breath coming into them, and they living and standing upon their feet. This second stage answering to the breathing into the nostrils of the first man the breath of life, and his becoming a living soul.

Now, we can apply this to the matter in hand, and perceive how many may be 'formed' who are never 'quickenened.'

In Christ all may be said to be formed, but they do not all live, nor should they be called regenerate (except upon the important Pauline principle of giving credit for true faith), until the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has entered into them, and Christ is more or less 'formed in' them.

Again, we might ask, does everything we introduce as food into our bodies become permanently incorporated with the body? We do what we can to avoid eating that which we cannot assimilate; but after all much which we introduce as food is not food, and is in due course eliminated from the system.

Even so we would judge it would be with the body of Christ. Not a few enter the body by baptism which are yet never vitally incorporated with Him, and as a consequence are finally rejected.

This vital incorporation is what we think the Scriptures mean by regeneration.

### XXXVII

LET us now return to the point from which we digressed.

We have clearly defined the primary effect of baptism, and the principal use for which it was instituted, and one which it has actually subserved from the beginning of the Gospel. And surely the purpose which it has actually subserved during all the age must be the purpose God intended it to subserve—viz., to draw a dividing line between those who believe—whether their faith be strong or weak, perfect or imperfect—and those who do not believe at all.

We have enlarged so much upon this subject because it seems important to show that it is not



the effect of baptism positively to communicate life, but to introduce men into that community sometimes called the Church, sometimes the kingdom of God, sometimes the temple of God, and sometimes the body of Christ, in which blessed community if any man *abide* he shall be saved.

This is no small or unimportant function of baptism.

It was necessary that the company of believers should be formed into a body, distinct from the unbelieving world, in order the more effectually to bring to bear upon them the gracious influences of the Holy Ghost internally; and to present externally the spectacle of organic existence and growth, so as to attract to itself those without, and gain upon the surrounding mass of unbelief and sin.

#### FURTHER USES OF BAPTISM

#### XXXVIII

WE now pass to consider other secondary uses and purposes of baptism, it being understood that by secondary we do not mean less important. Baptism, then, was instituted to be an initial *test of faith*.

The very fact that it is a confession of faith constitutes it also a *test*.

We cannot get away from faith in our contemplation of the rite.

Baptism is the very embodiment of faith, and faith is the very soul of baptism.

It is highly important to keep this in view if we would escape error.

The ordinance, then, serves as an initial test of faith—*initial* because many a test has to follow.

This view of the rite is much lost sight of—thrown into the background, and, therefore, lost sight of—in Churches established as it were in the heart of Christendom, far away from that boundary line where the Churches come in contact with heathenism, Mahommedanism, and Judaism.

Of course in the case of infants the test of the parents' faith in bringing their children to the font is from the circumstances of the case little or nothing; but in the mission field, whither we must go if we would study aright the use and effect of this initiatory rite of our holy religion, it is far otherwise; the baptism of adults being in many cases nothing less than a terrible ordeal, requiring the most genuine and heart-penetrating faith to undergo it. Many a time the nascent faith is too weak to face this test.

John xvi. 8.

There is a conviction of the truth of Christian doctrine wrought by the Holy Ghost, whose function it is to convince the *world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, but the conviction is paralysed by the too great love of this present world, or by the fear of man; consequently the public confession of faith is avoided, excuses are urged, delays are made, and baptism is declined.

## XXXIX

It is, perhaps, chiefly fear which operates to deter the partially believing person from the open confession of his faith, and so his faith becomes abortive.

Such seems to have been the case of the Jewish rulers mentioned by St. John. 'They did not confess Him (in baptism) lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' Nicodemus nearly succumbed to the fear of man in the matter of baptism, but from his interview with Christ—though timidly made—he received strength to make his confession.

John xii. 42,  
43.

And in the mission field how great are the trials to which young converts are exposed when baptism is contemplated! To be disowned by their nearest and dearest relatives; to witness their grief or anger, or both, at their professed subjection to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Of course the severity of this initial test varies with the circumstances.

With some the ordeal of public baptism is most distressing, and nothing but a genuine and strong faith already 'working by love' suffices to uphold the catechumen.

With others, again, the trial of faith is scarcely perceptible from the fact that their relatives and friends are indifferent, or have themselves embraced the faith, or the catechumen belongs to such a low

caste among his fellows that no particular notice is taken of his actions. But, generally speaking, public baptism—that is, the public profession of ‘repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,’ in the face of unbelievers, amid friends more or less displeased or offended, and oftentimes with the prospect of worldly loss—costs more or less mental and spiritual suffering.

## XL

BUT this test is initial only.

Ever after, in one form or another, *trials* are sent to prove our faith, of what sort it is; and that not because God does not see our hearts and know from the beginning who they are that truly believe, but with a view to the manifestation of those that are approved (δόκιμοι).

The Parable of the Sower shows how a faith which survives one temptation falls before another. Some ‘run well’ longer than others; of those who Gal. v. 7. ‘run’ not all ‘obtain’; one gives in at one stage 1 Cor. ix. 24. of the race, another at another, but all are credited, and ought to be credited by their fellow-Christians, with the possession of true faith, especially at the beginning of their course.

But faith thus professed and thus credited must be *proved*, and the only absolute proof (to others) of true genuine vital faith is ‘enduring to the end.’

Hence the many precepts and exhortations to

this effect addressed by the Apostles to their converts. Instead of bidding them repent, turn to God, and seek the forgiveness of their sins, it is taken for granted that they have done all this, and they are simply exhorted to—

Cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart ; Acts xi. 23.

Continue in the grace of God ; Acts xiii. 43.

Continue in the faith ; Col. i. 23.

Stand fast in the Lord ; Phil. iv. 1.

Abide in Him ; 1 John ii. 28.

Hold fast their profession (made in baptism) without wavering. Heb. x. 23.

The Apostolic exhortations often take the form of reminding Christians of the profession made in baptism, and calling upon them to make it good ; giving them clearly to understand that to do so is sure salvation, whilst to depart from their profession is certain condemnation.

Having in baptism professed to ‘crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts,’ they are called upon in accordance with this profession to ‘mortify the deeds of the body.’ Gal. v. 24.  
Rom. viii. 13.

Having professedly put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man, they are exhorted accordingly to ‘put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.’ Col. iii. 9, 10.  
Rom. xiii. 14.

Being themselves forgiven (their baptism being

Ephes. iv. 32. taken as evidence), they are told to ‘forgive one another.’

1 Cor. v. 7. Being professedly ‘unleavened,’ they are bidden ‘put away the old leaven.’

Their baptism having signified and proclaimed that they were ‘risen with Christ,’ they are exhorted to ‘seek those things which are above,’ so as to prove the reality of their newness of life.

Col. ii. 12.  
Col. iii. 1.

Therefore from baptism forward the life of a Christian is a life of *trial*, i.e. trial of his professed faith.

Those who remain steadfast unto the end—  
2 Pet. i. 10. thereby making their calling and election sure (which before was only presumptive), and proving their conversion to be real (which before was only apparent)—these are called ‘approved’ (δόκιμοι).

On the other hand, those who fall away—  
Luke xiv. 28. thereby showing, either that they had sat down to build without counting the cost, or that they had not understood with the heart the terms of the covenant—these, having put their hand to the plough, and by turning back proved themselves not fit for the kingdom of Heaven, these are called ‘reprobate’ (ἀδόκιμοι).  
Luke ix. 62.

## XLI

It has been said that the severity of the baptismal test varies exceedingly.

The fact is God the Holy Ghost looks after this. He increases or lessens the severity of the

test according to the various nature of the cases with which He has to deal—making it easier for some, harder for others.

And here it should be borne in mind that the easier the entrance the easier also the departure; the harder the entrance the harder also the abandonment of that which cost so much. So St. Paul, writing to the Galatians, asks, ‘Have ye suffered so many things in vain, if it be yet in vain?’ Gal. iii. 4.

The straiter the gate the less likely is he who passes it to wish to repass it. Matt. vii. 14.

God can set traps as well as Satan!

And if Satan can entangle men in such sort as to render escape well-nigh impossible, one would certainly deem that God could do as much. Baptism, when faith is sorely tried, is sometimes such a trap.

Moreover, the test of faith in baptism operates to keep out a large number of weak and wavering people until their faith has become more decided; in fact, it assists men to overcome their indecision, and raises their faith at the same time that it exercises it—no small advantage.

Nor need we regret if, on the other hand, it serves to exclude many who would lightly profess what they did not feel.

In all this we see abundant proof of Divine wisdom, and we perceive how important are the functions of this sacred rite in the natural sphere of its operation.



THE MORAL EFFECT OF BAPTISM UPON  
THOSE WHO WITNESS IT

## XLII

FURTHERMORE, in estimating the value of baptism we must not forget the effect it often has upon those who *witness* the ceremony—persons generally who are not unacquainted with the circumstances of those to whom the rite is administered.

To such it becomes a witness, a testimony, a powerful argument on behalf of the truth. The baptized person, in and by his baptism (and if, being the father of a family, he bring his whole household with him, so much the better) bears witness to the truth, and ‘sets to his seal that God is true.’

John iii. 33.

Hence the value from one point of view of the external ceremony. The impression made upon the heathen around is deepened by the solemn spectacle; though if it be fully known and declared that the baptism has taken place, it certainly suffices.

However, in either case baptism is a bearing witness for God, because it is a public profession of belief ‘of the record which God gave of His Son.’ It confirms the witness of God by endorsing it, so to speak; and it is to a certain extent a condemnation of those who, by not receiving the record which God gave His Son, virtually make Him a liar.

1 John v. 10.

If the truth were known we should find many have been attracted to Christ by the spectacle of constancy, combined with meekness, in some convert coming to holy baptism; and, undeterred by any threat, undismayed by any terror, yielding himself to God; and, evidently supported by a holy joy, confessing with calm voice the Lord that bought him.

For verily baptism is confessing God before men, or, rather, it is the first act of such confession, the whole life thenceforward being its continuation and confirmation.

And one man by his 'good profession before many witnesses' encourages another to do the same. When one is emboldened to 'put on Christ,' another is helped by his example. Thus baptism promotes the growth of the Church, and becomes a mode of preaching which touches the heart and moves the conscience of the thoughtful beholder. 1 Tim. vi. 12.

Of course all this is part of the purpose of the ordinance; but it can only be observed, so to speak, *in action*.

Baptism is a weapon of Christian warfare—'not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds'—intended for use chiefly, as it were, *in line of battle*. There its special use and power is seen. 2 Cor. x. 4.

## THE SACRAMENTAL NATURE OF BAPTISM

## XLIII

It is now time to draw attention to the meaning and value of baptism as a sign or sacrament.

Hitherto we have said nothing upon this point. We have shown its connection with faith, and explained how it serves to distinguish the believer from the unbeliever, the Church from the heathen world surrounding it; how it forms a body embracing among its members not only those who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, but those who only profess so to do.

Luke xxii. 31. We have seen how this company has to be ‘sifted as wheat’; how the faith of some fails, of others remains; how those who continue in the faith are saved, the rest perish; how it is impossible to distinguish infallibly (especially in the early stage) between the regenerate and the unregenerate, because it is impossible for *man* to know who will continue in the faith, and who will not. We have shown that infants can be, and ought to be, introduced into this community, their parents (or sponsors) seeing to it that they are taught ‘to observe all things whatsoever Christ commanded,’ and not giving them a chance to acknowledge any other God but the true God. We have pointed out that infant baptism is all the more reasonable in Christian communities from the fact that the

young children as they grow up will never be likely to witness any idolatrous rites, or ever hear the name of any other gods invoked; whereas in heathen countries greater care is needed, *i.e.* sponsors are more needed, lest haply the little ones might fall into heathen surroundings again, and never receive a Christian education at all.

We have taken into account the use of baptism as a declaration and confession of faith, showing that it is also, in more or less degree, a test of faith in the convert, and a testimony to the truth in the eyes of the world.

But we have not yet considered the particular sacramental power of the ordinance, which may truly be called its most precious attribute—and to this we must now address ourselves.

#### XLIV

THERE was an ancient custom prevalent amongst men, when making a solemn covenant between themselves, to have some external visible sign or token to serve as a memorial, as well as ratification of the same; so that in the presence of it, as of a witness, neither party could deny the engagement.

For instance, Jacob and Laban when they parted made a covenant to forget the past, and entertain thenceforward none but friendly relations towards each other. Gen. xxxi. 44.

By way of ratifying this covenant they cast up a heap of stones and erected a pillar ; and Laban said to Jacob, ‘ Behold this heap and behold this pillar which I have cast betwixt thee and me : this heap be witness, and this pillar be witness that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou wilt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me for harm.’

And one may see the appropriateness of the sign. The heap of stones was an *obstacle*, and was no doubt intended to represent figuratively the obstacle which the covenant was to be to any hostile proceeding of the one against the other. The pillar also was a miniature watch-tower or Mizpah, showing in a figure how God would watch over each from above after their separation, and if either one or other violated the compact, would see and judge.

Now, although neither party was ever likely to see the heap or the pillar again, yet the outward act and ceremony was calculated to impress upon both the solemn nature of the covenant made.

## XLV

ANOTHER interesting instance is found in the story of Rahab.

Having obtained a promise from the spies that they would spare her and her father’s house, she asked of them a true token, *i.e.* some visible symbol which would help her to believe their word,

and confirm the promise made by the spies. In response to this appeal they bade her bind the scarlet thread or rope, by which she had let them down, in the window; that thus what had been instrumental to their safety might be instrumental also to hers.

The scarlet line, to interpret Scripture by Scripture (see Song of Solomon iv. 3, 'Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet'), would seem to mean the lips of the Church uttering the truth.

The use and power of this token was very striking. From the time that Rahab bound it in the window in obedience to the command of the spies, it doubtless became to her a comforting pledge of her own safety, believing as she fully did that the city must fall.

When the time came that the children of Israel compassed the city, it is evident that the Lord Himself looked upon the token, and caused that that particular part of the wall of the city should not fall when the rest did, or should so fall as not to injure the inmates of that particular house.

Thus what was bound on earth was bound in Heaven. Joshua also beheld it and respected the covenant; and spared Rahab, and her father's house, and all that she had.

Truly the scarlet line played a sufficiently important part in this transaction, being nothing less than an ostensible proof of Rahab's faith.

It was her faith indeed which saved her, not the scarlet line; but the binding of the scarlet line

according to that which was commanded her, testified to, and proved her faith, and so *secured* the reward of her faith.

What would have happened had she neglected to bind the scarlet cord in the window, as deeming it a matter of small importance? So long as she believed in the promise itself, we are hardly, perhaps, in a position to say; but this much we must think, that to have cast contempt upon those who were willing and ready to befriend, would have been tempting them to ignore their promise, and could not have been otherwise than perilous.

## XLVI

It is easy to see that expedients such as these, in order to give vividness and reality to covenants, would be the more necessary in times when the art of writing was so little cultivated, and that of printing unknown.

They are not now used because deeds of agreement can be drawn up on durable paper or parchment, and can be appealed to in proof of this or that matter of covenant, without the possibility of evasion.

But even now we have not only the signatures of the contracting parties, but of personal witnesses to attest the first signature, and in addition to this we append the visible seal in ratification of the whole, that thus the instrument may be signed,



sealed, and delivered to him whose duty it is to preserve it for future reference.

This visible seal is the modern substitute for those external tokens in use formerly, but now rendered obsolete by the advance of civilisation.

Now the custom prevalent amongst men of old for the ratification of solemn agreements has been adopted by God Himself in His dealings with mankind, and for a like purpose.

An act of gracious condescension to man's frailty, done with a view to produce in the minds of men a favourable reception of His promises, and a more complete reliance upon them.

## XI.VII

In illustration of this we will first take an example of a simple promise made to man, with a sign added to help his faith.

This is found in the story of Hezekiah.

2 Kings xx.

Hezekiah was sick unto death; being told by Isaiah to prepare for death, he had recourse to prayer. In answer to his prayer, Isaiah was sent to announce the addition of fifteen years to his life, and to inform him that in three days' time he would be well enough to go up to the house of the Lord.

The news was almost too good for the king. Like Rahab, he wanted a 'true token'; so he asked, 'What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal

me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day ? ’

Then in marvellous condescension the Lord granted him a choice of two signs, of which he chose that which seemed to him the more difficult of accomplishment, viz., that the shadow on the dial of Ahaz should go ten degrees backward.

This sign granted, the king was helped to believe the good news, and believing, he obtained the promise.

It will be observed that the sign was not otherwise than appropriate to the matter of the promise itself.

#### XLVIII

THE next example is nearly as simple.

After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah, and not with Noah only, but with ‘every living creature of all flesh.’

Of this covenant he added the rainbow as token. A most appropriate sign, springing from the ‘clear shining after rain,’ which marks the departure of the storm ; and of such a nature as to be visible not only to Noah and his descendants, but also to every living creature of all flesh, with whom the covenant was made, assuring them that they should no more be cut off by the waters of a flood.

Thus, doubtless, the brute creation, so sensitive to natural phenomena, have their fears abated as well as man.

By way of digression, we would like to remark that the fact that the rainbow is seen in every quarter of the globe, goes far to prove that the deluge was not a partial flood (as some contend) but enveloped the whole earth. The more so as, if it was partial, then God has broken his covenant, for partial deluges have occurred in spite of rainbows.

God promised that all flesh—man and beast—should not again be cut off in this manner; and the rainbow is at once the sign and pledge of its fulfilment.

But the manner in which the sign carries the assurance to man is instructive and worth remembering.

We read not only that ‘the bow shall be seen in the cloud,’ but it is added, ‘And I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant’; that is, the divinely appointed token puts God in remembrance of His own covenant.

Gen. ix. 16.

Isaiah xliii.  
26.

Now we know that God really needs no reminding. He is not a man that He should forget; but we are hereby led to reason concerning God that when He sees the token He will remember the promise; and we, thus reasoning, ‘assure our hearts before Him.’

1 John iii. 19.

And what is more, when the sign is something given us *to do*, we shall be the less likely to omit to do it, when we recollect that it is He who will look upon it and act accordingly towards us.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper our dealings are

## XLIX

THE importance of the strict observation of any sign given us by God in ratification of any promise may also be perceived by the special obligation imposed upon the children of Israel to keep the Sabbath from polluting it.

The Sabbath was made to them a sign (by Divine appointment) that they were an holy people unto the Lord, chosen to be a special people to Himself above all nations.

Deut. vii. 6.

Exod. xxxi.  
13.

Consequently we read, ‘Verily My Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.’

Exod. xxxi.  
15.

Death was the penalty of neglecting the sign of the covenant. ‘Whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath, he shall surely be put to death.’

Why such a severe enactment?

For one reason amongst others that the obser-

*directly* with Jesus, not with God the Father, and the words,

τοῦτο ποιείτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν,

must mean either

‘Do this in remembrance of Me,’

or ‘Do this for reminding Me.’

Would it not be permissible to combine both, and consider that in that ordinance of *Love*

Jesus says to us, ‘Children! Remember Me!’

and We say to Jesus, ‘Lord! Remember us!’

If *any* flower be put on the Lord’s Table, let it be a forget-me-not.

vance of the Sabbath was not merely a sign, but an important and powerful means of bringing to pass the promised sanctification of the people. In sanctifying the Sabbath they were really sanctifying themselves unto the Lord, and were continually reminded of the relation in which they stood to God.

It became an evidence to themselves of this very thing; truly a most blessed appointment, full of comfort and mercy, when properly understood and appreciated.

## L

FURTHERMORE, how God looks upon signs, and acts accordingly towards us, is strikingly illustrated by the sign commanded to the children of Israel when God promised to spare *their* firstborn, whilst slaying the firstborn of the Egyptians, though the Israelites *deserved* the visitation equally with the Egyptians.

The command concerning this was, after the sacrifice of the pascal lamb, to ‘take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning; for the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and *when He seeth* the blood upon the lintel and on the two side posts the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your house to smite you.’

Exod. xii. 22,  
23.

Hence we learn that if God gives a promise

attaching to it an external visible sign, to neglect it is perilous, even though we may see no use in it and think it unnecessary.

Thus, as we turn from one instance to another of God's way of adding an external sign or token in confirmation of some promise, the sign itself being sometimes efficacious, directly or indirectly, in bringing to pass the fulfilment of the promised mercy, we discover fresh proof of the Divine goodness, and are led to exclaim with the Apostle, 'Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.'

Rom. xi. 33.

## LI

A FEW words must now be said concerning the 'sign of circumcision,' which will lead us on to the special subject of our investigation.

Gen. xvii  
10, 11.

Circumcision was the sign given to Abraham and made obligatory upon him, though not in connection with the covenant of law, but of promise.

Rom. iv. 11.

It was given as a seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham had, yet being uncircumcised, so that circumcision was originally connected with faith, not with works.

In circumcising their children, Abraham and his immediate descendants both declared their

faith in the promises of God, and were assured of their interest in them.

The same sign was afterwards transferred to the Mosaic Covenant.

The reason why the same sign was used for both covenants must be found in the statement of St. Paul that 'the covenant, which was confirmed before in Christ, the law, which was four hundred years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect.' Therefore, no change was made in the sign. Gal. iii. 17.

But the meaning of the sign was read differently. To Abraham it represented the obedience of faith already rendered, and the blessings from it secured. Under Moses it represented obedience not rendered, but due, and the blessings made conditional upon obedience yielded. 'This do and thou shalt live.' Luke x. 28.

Originally the sign was given as a pledge of a promised inheritance; but Abraham's degenerate children were slow to see that to prove themselves Abraham's seed, and so inherit the blessing, circumcision by itself was not enough; they must also walk in the steps of their father, show his faith, and render his obedience. John viii. 39.

Hence it became necessary to *emphasize the obligation.*

The sign doubtless carried with it the pledge of entering into the promised rest; and when the



Heb. iii. 19. children of Israel 'entered not in because of unbelief' they seemed to have considered themselves defrauded, forgetting that it was entirely their own fault.

So, though circumcised themselves, they would not circumcise their children: as much as to say what is the use of circumcision if we, who are circumcised, are denied the promise.

Num. xiv. 34. Or they might have taken offence at the word spoken to them—'Ye shall know my breach of promise'—and regarding it as affecting their children's position as well as their own, left them uncircumcised.

Ezek. xviii. 4. But 'the soul that sinneth it shall die.' Though the fathers had eaten sour grapes, the children's teeth were not thus to be set on edge.

Josh. v. 2-9. What the parents neglected to do the Church did for them after their parents were dead; and as soon as they set foot upon the land of promise they were circumcised every one, and their reproach rolled away.

## LII

How prone men are to imagine (like those Israelites) that the external sign, unaccompanied by change of heart, conveys the blessing, we see by the fact that even in our Lord's time many prided themselves on being the seed of Abraham merely because of the circumcision, having 'confidence in the flesh,' and altogether forgetting the admonition of Moses—

John viii. 33. Phil. iii. 3.

‘The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you, above all people as it is this day. Circumcise *therefore* the foreskin of your *heart*, and be no more stiff-necked.’

Now this particular aspect of the Mosaic covenant emphasizing the obligation underlying the Abrahamic covenant, but sadly overlooked, when properly apprehended, had the effect in those who were right-minded of making them feel their sins, and wish for a Saviour, and look for the fulfilment of the promise that one should come who would ‘turn the hearts of the fathers to the children’—*i.e.* would restore the primitive faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, reproducing it in the hearts of their degenerate children, and with the faith the full blessings of the covenant.

Such an one was John the Baptist, who came urging them not to say within themselves (as they had been accustomed to do), ‘We have Abraham to our Father,’ but admonishing them to repent. Repentance including all that is implied in turning the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. Matt. iii. 9.

Repentance from dead works restores faith.

### LIII

COMING now to the important truth that baptism is the sign which God has been pleased to attach to

the new covenant in place of circumcision—for a change of sign had become necessary—let us consider :—

(i.) What are the distinctive promises upon which the better covenant is established ?

(ii.) How are these promises signified in baptism ?

(iii.) Why is the reception of the sign commanded in addition to belief of the promises ?

(iv.) What benefit or benefits are derived from the reception of the sign, independently of the benefit derived from belief of the promises ?

These are simple questions, susceptible of simple answers.

Complicated views and ideas only lead to confusion, and are of no real advantage ; but attention to Scripture will obviate complication.

## LV

(i.) WHAT are the distinctive promises of the better covenant ?

John i. 17.

The general outline to be filled in is this : ‘ The Law was given by Moses, but *Grace* and *Truth* came by Jesus Christ.’

Grace and truth are the grand characteristics of the better covenant.

Grace being opposed to the works, and truth to the shadows of the law.

Grace is shown by the requirement of faith only for the attainment of every promise, thus bringing salvation *nigh*. Rom. iv. 16.  
Rom. x. 8.

Truth is shown in the reality and fulness of the blessings themselves—no longer shadows, but substance—thus making salvation *sure*. Col. ii. 17.

To fill in this outline we have four distinctive promises :—

(a) The forgiveness of sin.

The absolute forgiveness, not merely the passing over- or letting go by- (*παράσις*) of sin, but its entire and final remission (*ἄφεσις*) ; in other words, righteousness, or justification through the blood of the covenant.

(β) The adoption of sons.

The national adoption (Rom. ix. 4) of the people of Israel was but a shadow of that real relationship which exists between God the Father and every one of His dear children in Christ Jesus. The adoption (*υἱοθεσία*) means more than adoption amongst men ; for the adopted sons of God become real and actual sons by spiritual generation.

(γ) The gift of the Holy Ghost.

Even that ‘ promise of the Father ’ which could not be given until Christ was glorified. Acts-i. 4.  
John vii. 39.

(δ) Eternal life.

As it is written, ‘ The Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord ’ ; and again, ‘ This is the record that God hath given unto us Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son.’ Rom. v. 21.  
1 John v. 11.

2 Pet. i. 4.

All these 'exceeding great and precious promises' are so closely related one to another as to be inseparable, and they may all be summed up in one word, REGENERATION.

## LVI

CONCERNING these promises, it is necessary to understand that they are all obtained by faith, *i.e.* by believing with the heart the blessed truth of the Gospel.

Let one text from Scripture prove this most important point in respect to each.

Acts xiii. 38,  
39.

(a) That the forgiveness of sins is secured by faith we learn from the words spoken by St. Peter in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia : ' Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him *all that believe* are *justified* from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.'

John i. 12.

(β) That the adoption of sons is of faith is shown from the language of St. John—' But as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the *Sons of God*, even to them that *believe* on His name.'

John vii. 39.

(γ) That the Holy Ghost is given to him that believes the same Evangelist teaches, when, com-

menting upon our Lord's words uttered on the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles, he adds, 'This spake He of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive.'

(8) That eternal life is obtained by faith we learn from the well-known words which have touched so many hearts, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' John iii. 16

It is important to bear in mind that these promises are made to faith, not to baptism independently of faith. But baptism is commanded in conjunction with faith, for the reasons which it is the object of this treatise to define.

## LVII

WE now come to Question ii. How are these promises signified in baptism?

The appropriateness of the sign is more or less evident with regard to each.

(a) As regards the forgiveness of sins.

Forgiveness is often spoken of in Scripture as if it were a washing of the heart, soul, or conscience. For example, David prays, 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' Psalm li. 2. But baptism is a washing—an outward washing, significant of an inward spiritual washing—and whereas the forgiveness of sins involves all the

Titus iii. 5.

other blessings of the better covenant, it is called by St. Paul the 'washing of regeneration.'<sup>1</sup>

(β) As regards the adoption of sons.

Of this the *symbolism* is not so clear, but the connection between adoption and the rite of baptism will soon engage our attention, and will be found both close and precious. Let it suffice to remark here that persons adopted into a family have ever taken the *name* of the adopting person. The appellation Christianus (Christian) is formed according to the rule current amongst the Romans to mark such adoption.

(γ) As to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah xlv. 3.

We know from several Scriptures that water is an emblem of the Holy Spirit, as it is written, 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessing upon thine offspring,' and the affusion of water in baptism agrees in the way of symbol with this 'sprinkling' and 'pouring out' of God's Spirit upon His people.

(δ) Eternal life is shown forth in baptism through the symbolical acts of going down into the water and coming forth again out of it to represent life from death—and therefore everlasting

<sup>1</sup> There are reasons why λουτρὸν should be rendered washing, not laver; inasmuch as the Apostle would always have been accustomed to call a laver λουτήρ. See Septuagint *passim*; also as ἀνακαίνωσις is a spiritual act, it would be incongruous to give a material meaning to λουτρόν.



life—the death having expiated the sin and introduced to a new life, which we rejoice to think is indestructible.

## LVIII

BAPTISM, therefore, being a figurative representation of the blessings of the better covenant as summed up in the one word REGENERATION, and being also an outward objective evidence of that inward subjective faith which claims and apprehends regenerating grace, we are not surprised to find

A. That some Scriptures appear to ascribe to baptism effects which are really due to faith.

Thus we read in Acts ii. 38 of the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost spoken of as though baptism were the very means and channel of their bestowal, whereas we know that it is the faith vitalizing the baptism which obtains the blessing.

Again, in 1 Peter, iii. 21, we read of baptism saving us.

It is sometimes convenient to attribute to the external emblem—by a figure of speech—the power of the really efficient cause.

Thus we speak of a benefice in the gift of the Crown. The crown is the external emblem of royalty, and by it we mean the Sovereign who wears the crown, and gives away the benefice. But in regard to this interesting passage in St. Peter's Epistle it should be noted that baptism saves us '*by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*' Let this

statement be taken in connection with Col. ii. 12, where we are taught that in baptism we are risen with Christ '*through the faith* of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead.' These two passages are strictly parallel, and one explains the other.

Again, in Ephesians v. 26, we read of Christ sanctifying and cleansing His church with the washing of water by the Word. The washing of water is, of course, an allusion to baptism, but that faith underlies this allusion is shown by the added phrase 'by the Word' (*ἐν ῥήματι*).<sup>1</sup> 'By the Word' means by the Gospel believed, the faith thus purifying the heart, as the water does the body. A careful comparison of Rom. x. 8 with Acts xv. 9 in the original Greek will show the correctness of this explanation.

Other instances of the same nature will readily occur to the reader.

B. That many theologians should use the term baptismal regeneration.

There can be no objection to this expression, provided always that the part which faith plays is clearly kept in view.

If faith holds its proper position 'baptismal regeneration' means the same thing as justification by faith.

But if we obliterate faith, or let it be directed

<sup>1</sup> *ῥήμα* has the same relation to baptism which *γράμμα* has to circumcision. Compare Rom. ii. 27 with Eph. v. 26.

towards the rite of baptism rather than towards the Triune God, of whom baptism is the acknowledgment; if faith is dislodged or distorted, the door is immediately opened for all manner of superstition in doctrine and practice; which thing we know has oftentimes come to pass, creating great confusion of thought in teaching; to the great disparagement of the ordinance of baptism, and to the great detriment of souls.

But if by baptismal regeneration we mean the obtaining of regenerating grace by the exercise of a true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, *declared in baptism*, we are quite within the limits of Bible truth, and no one can justly impugn our doctrine.

At the same time, if—as many have done, and still do—we account those lower degrees of grace which accompany the lower degrees of faith (for it is done unto every man according unto his faith); if we account Church membership, illumination, conviction, followed by temporary amendment of life (the grace which corresponds to the ‘rain’ which cometh upon just and unjust alike); if we account these things as being regeneration, such a doctrine of baptismal regeneration may be held without fear of superstition, but it must be held at the expense of the ideal presented to us in the Scriptures of true spiritual regeneration, and with a proportionate enfeeblement and depreciation of the Divine ordinance.<sup>1</sup>

Matt. v. 45.

Heb. vi. 7, 8.

<sup>1</sup> See Paragraph xx.

The true baptismal regeneration, which preserves alike the dignity of baptism and the scriptural grandeur of regeneration, depends upon faith which worketh by love, whose throne is in the heart, supported on the one hand by spiritual understanding, on the other by patience.<sup>1</sup>

## LX

So we pass to Question iii.

‘Why is the reception of the sign commanded in addition to belief of the promises?’

The answer to this question has been already in large measure given, and may be briefly dismissed.

We have seen how God has thought fit to attach external signs to His covenants, and how he has in many cases made them *obligatory*; why not also that attached to the new covenant? Partly, no doubt, it is *necessary* for the sake of the external mark as a mark, that those who bear it may be distinguished from those who do not, *i.e.* as has been already shown, it is *necessary* to gather into a visible body and organization those who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, just as a regiment needs a distinctive uniform, or an army a flag.

Partly, also, it is necessary as an outward act

<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of Justification by Faith might be stated somewhat as follows: As Christ in us—*i.e.* in our nature—was accounted a sinner (not being one), as a step towards making an end of sins; so we, in Christ, are accounted righteous (not being so), as a step towards bringing in everlasting righteousness.

by which a man may openly declare his faith in Christ, and by which, in so doing, his faith may be more or less put to the test, and tried, and, being called into active exercise, be strengthened. This last reason, the strengthening of his faith, will be better understood when we shall have considered the still remaining question.

## LXI

(iv.) WHAT benefit is derived from the reception of the sign, independently of the benefit derived from belief of the promises?

The benefit derived from belief of the promises of God contained in the new covenant is just simply their attainment. Nothing is withheld from him who believes, nothing impossible to him in the exercise of his faith. By grace all things are his, and by faith he appropriates them. This is indubitably true; but what then remains to be gained by and through the external sign of baptism? What additional benefit yet remains if faith obtains all?

1 Cor. xiii. 22.

Well, if a man should say, 'I can obtain all by faith without being baptized,' let him try; and he will presently find a strange impediment in the way of his spiritual advancement. He will find the wheels of his faith move as heavily as did those of Pharaoh's chariots when entangled in the Red Sea. He will find that to believe without being baptized, and yet to expect health and vigour of

soul, is like planting a vine in some dark cellar, keeping it excluded from light and air and dew and sunshine, and yet looking that it should bring forth grapes. Of course it languishes and dies. And so does the faith of him who *despises* baptism.

This alone is enough to place baptism high in the economy of the Gospel.

But let us seek to understand the reason of this.

## LXII

THE power of baptism and its peculiar grace may be best learnt from the account of the baptism of Jesus Christ.

John i. 7. John was sent to bear witness of the Light; he, therefore, pointed his disciples to Jesus as the  
 John i. 29. 'Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world': as much as to say, the time is now come when the sacrifices offered according to the Law, and 'which can never take away sins,' must cease, to give place to the one true Sacrifice, by which offering all sin shall be once and for ever expiated; Heb. x. 11. then no more offering will be needed, nor, if needed, Heb. x. 18. possible. Heb. x. 26.

To this Sacrifice, to this Lamb of God, he pointed all men, urging them while confessing their sins to seek their remission in this (to them) new and infallible way—*i.e.* by faith in Christ.

To this Divine teaching Jesus felt it His duty to subscribe, setting His seal to it as true by undergoing that outward ordinance which signified ac-

ceptance of the great prophet's doctrine ; so that virtually Christ proclaimed His own belief in Himself as the Son of God, and one offering for sin, foreordained, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but then by the ministry of the Baptist made manifest unto Israel.

1 Pet. i. 19, 20.

John i. 31

This public manifestation of Himself was *necessary*, and could not be omitted.

There were times when He could hide Himself, and when He could charge the people that they should not make Him known ; but at this, the commencement of His ministry, it was necessary that His true nature and character and work should be published abroad.

Matt. xii. 16.

Christ's answer to the Baptist's remonstrance—  
'I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me'—may be taken as supplying at least one reason for His baptism : 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'

Matt. iii. 14, 15.

To fulfil all righteousness is but another expression for fulfilling all that the prophets, moved by the Holy Ghost, had spoken.

Indeed, St. Matthew, at the end of the account given of the baptism of Jesus, might have added, 'Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.'

Isaiah xi. 2, and lxi. 1.

It is plain that our Lord Himself regarded it as the fulfilment of this Scripture from His words in



Luke iv. 18. the synagogue of Nazareth related by St. Luke in such close connection with His baptism ; and it is hardly necessary to add that, had such a predicted sign remained unfulfilled, some excuse would have been left for those who refused to acknowledge Him as the promised Messiah.

But what special benefit did it bring to Jesus Himself ? and how could He need anything which He did not already possess ?

### LXIII

It will be remembered that at His baptism two things happened, of which it would appear He only Himself and the Baptist were conscious.

(i.) The Heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him.  
 Luke iii. 22.

(ii.) A voice came from Heaven, which said, 'Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'

Would that voice have come, or that Spirit have so descended, except on such an occasion ?

See, then, what was gained—

An *assurance*, and an *unction*.

A subjective assurance, and an objective unction. Was the assurance needed ? was the unction ? Who can doubt that both were needed ?

The assurance was that He was the 'Son of

God' and 'beloved.' It might seem a strange thing that Jesus should need to be assured of this. But when we read that immediately after His baptism He was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, and that the first words addressed to Him by the tempter were, '*If Thou be the Son of God*'; and when we perceive that the suggestion to command stones to become bread implied covertly that if He was the Son of God He could not be 'beloved,' but a neglected, ill-treated Son left without necessary food; and when we further read how, foiled in this direction, the tempter took up a contrary position, and on the very ground that Jesus was the beloved Son of God, urged Him to an act of presumption—when we read and mark these things, we see a correspondence between the voice which came from Heaven and the voices of the tempter; and are led to conclude that strength was communicated through the one to enable Him the better to meet the assaults made upon Him through the other.

Matt. Iv.  
11.

Then there was the unction—the anointing with the Holy Ghost—that is, the anointing to the office of *Prophet*.

When we read that Jesus Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption—or, as the Revised Version more closely renders it, is made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption—we ought to remember that He is made

1 Cor. i. 30.

unto us 'wisdom from God' as anointed Prophet whilst upon earth; 'righteousness and sanctification' as our anointed High Priest now in Heaven, and as long as He is in Heaven; and 'redemption' as our anointed King, when He shall return in glory.

But in order that He should be made unto us  
*Isaiah xi. 2.* 'wisdom from God' it was necessary that the Spirit of the Lord should 'rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding,' and that was it which was accomplished at His baptism.

Before He left the earth He resigned the prophetic office, transmitting it in turn to His Church,  
*Ephes. ii. 20.* that it might be built upon a foundation not only of apostles, but also of prophets.

This He did when He breathed upon the eleven  
*John xx. 24.* (Thomas excepted) and 'them that were with them,'  
*Luke xxiv. 33.* and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained.'

#### DIGRESSION CONCERNING THE PROPHETIC OFFICE

#### LXIV

THE prophetic office (not the priestly) is charged with the authority of remitting and retaining sin. The proof of possessing this authority consists in the power of inflicting and healing disease. The higher power is not committed without the lower;

in fact, the superior function involves the inferior. To cause or cure disease, to kill or to make alive, is a lower degree of power than to remit or retain sin ; but it is harder to claim, because it cannot be simulated, as Christ Himself was careful to point out. Matt. ix. 5, 6.

Prophets were invested with the special prerogative of discerning the hearts and reading the characters of men.

It was said to Elisha, ‘ Art thou come unto me to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son ? ’ It was said of Christ, ‘ This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, for she is a sinner.’ It was said to Christ when He showed Himself acquainted with the antecedents of the speaker, ‘ Sir, I perceive that Thou art a prophet.’ 1 Kings xvii. 18.  
Luke vii. 39.  
John iv. 19.

No better example of remitting and retaining sin can be adduced than that of the prophet Elisha, who immediately upon investiture with the mantle of his predecessor removed a curse from the inhabitants of Jericho, by healing the waters ; and inflicted a curse upon the mocking children of Bethel, by delivering them up to be slain of bears. The same prophet remitted the sins of Naaman, healing his leprosy ; but retained the sin of Gehazi, transferring the disease to him. Nathan, the prophet, proved his competency to announce the forgiveness of David’s sin by the very sentence of death pronounced upon the child. And Jeremiah 2 Kings ii. 19.  
2 Kings ii. 23.  
2 Kings v. 27.  
2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

Jer. xxviii.  
15, 17.

proved that he was authorized to retain the sin of Hananiah by determining the time of his death, which came to pass accordingly.

We need never, therefore, be in doubt as to who hath power on earth to forgive sin. The same person must also have power on earth to heal or inflict disease, to kill or to make alive.

If any one will cause an Ananias to die with a lie in his mouth, or a Dorcas—full of good works and almsdeeds which she did—to come to life, let *him* claim the power to remit or retain sin, and no one will gainsay his right.

## LXV

To return from this digression. The gain of baptism to our Blessed Lord has now been explained. The inward assurance was the defensive armour; the anointing was an offensive weapon.

Armed thus He was better equipped for the work to which He was sent.

Hence we are able to argue concerning the benefit of the reception of the sign of the covenant, independently of the benefit derived from belief of the promises.

In and at his baptism the convert from heathenism, or Mahommedanism, or Judaism, is *armed* for the Christian warfare with an assurance, and with an unction—both most precious, invaluable, nay, indispensable; so much so that the

*refusal* to be baptized would cause the declension and ultimate extinction of the faith of such an one.

The shadow never taking a substantial form, the abstract never becoming concrete, would gradually vanish away.

This thing, however, *never happens when faith is vital*: no one who 'believes with the heart unto righteousness' will shrink from making sooner or later 'confession with the mouth unto salvation'; while he who makes confession of his faith, even though imperfect, being (after baptism) immediately surrounded by the means of grace, will oftentimes be led on to the full and hearty 'acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness' and attain to all which his baptism signified.

Rom. x. 10.

Titus 1. 1.

## LXVI

BUT let us trace these things in Holy Scripture.

First, let us consider the assurance.

*i.e.* The assurance of adoption and forgiveness.

'Ye received not' it is written in Rom. viii. 15 (Revised Version), 'ye received not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father.' Those who cry Abba Father! do so because they are conscious of being God's children. And when but at baptism (remember, dear reader, the missionary aspect of the ordinance) is this spirit generally received? and when but at baptism does the Spirit so

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Rom. viii. 16. mightily and for the first time 'bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?'

And this in order that the convert may, at the very outset of his Christian course, be made aware of the great change which has been wrought in him through his faith; that he may enter upon the service of God with the blessed consciousness that

Gal. iv. 7. he is 'no more a servant but a son,' and may claim for himself all those high privileges which attend

Rom. viii. 21. the 'glorious liberty of the children of God.'

How earnestly does St. Paul endeavour to raise the souls of his Galatian converts to this baptismal level! He is most anxious to make them feel and understand that they are not servants, but sons. Under the law they were servants, under grace (*i.e.* by faith) they were sons. For all the baptized put

Gal. iii. 27. on Christ, so that whatever He is, they are. If He is a son, they are sons, and must not forget it. Yet these Galatians seem to have lost the assurance of sonship.

Doubtless after the apostolic remonstrance those who once had it recovered it: of the rest who never had had the witness in themselves, some were stirred up to a nobler faith, and found it; the remainder (few, it is to be hoped) fell from grace.

It is scarcely necessary to say that when faith as declared in baptism is not strong enough to secure the gift of justification, neither the assurance of sonship, nor yet of pardon, are given, but.

of course they may and will be given when the faith is perfected.

## LXVII

FAITH therefore alone, provided always it be with the heart, brings the humble and repentant sinner into union with the second Adam.

The doctrine of the two Adams is very simple and very important.

The first—made a living soul—was tempted and fell, and became the author of sin and death to all his descendants.

The second—made a quickening spirit—was tempted and fell not, and became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him.

All the family of the first Adam must die, if they ‘neglect so great a salvation.’

All the family of the second Adam ‘shall be made alive’ when He shall raise them up at the last day. Baptism *announces* our happy entrance into the family of the second Adam *through faith in Him*.<sup>1</sup>

So we see that regeneration is objectively secured

<sup>1</sup> The words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 22: ‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,’ refer only to the *body*. The meaning is: All of us *Christians* die because of our connection with the first Adam, but shall be made alive again at the last day because of our union with the second Adam. The same truth is otherwise expressed in Rom. viii. 10, 11.

by a true and lively faith, and subjectively realized through the ordinance of baptism.

Here then is baptismal regeneration from another point of view.

And those holy men of old, who in their baptism first became conscious that they were quickened, and had risen with Christ, may be pardoned when they speak of baptism as a regenerating ordinance without particular reference to the faith which, underlying the baptism, was the real procuring cause.

How beautifully is the assurance of sonship taught in the parable of the prodigal son !

And if the parable in its primary signification represent the return of the heathen (Gentiles) to God, the application to the matter in hand is the more striking.

By faith the prodigal arose and came to his father, content to be made as an hired servant ; but while yet a great way off his father runs to meet him. Surely the kiss, the best robe, the ring, the shoes, denote the various blessings (conditionally) inherent in baptism.

The kiss, forgiveness : the best robe, righteousness : the ring, exalted rank : the shoes, strength for walking in newness of life.

What room was there left for him to doubt that he was indeed a son, a beloved son, a pardoned son ?

LXVIII

SECONDLY, concerning the assurance of forgiveness. Of course this was unneeded in our Lord's case; yet why were the words added 'in Thee I am well pleased' ?<sup>1</sup>

May we not think that in that dark hour, when the iniquity of us all was laid upon Him, when He was 'made sin for us' and 'numbered with the transgressors,' that voice, re-echoing both from Jordan and from the Mount of Transfiguration, supported and comforted Him. 'Thou art My beloved son in whom I am well pleased.'

Isaiah liii. 6.  
2 Cor. v. 20.

But with us the assurance of forgiveness is a vital matter; we cannot do without it; we should utterly faint without this cordial. And we may be certain that no one coming to baptism with a true and lively faith in the atoning power of the blood of Jesus will go away without a most comforting assurance that all is forgiven.

This assurance removes definitely a terrible burden from the conscience, and sets the young Christian free for happy service.

We find this in the words addressed by Ananias

<sup>1</sup> It should be observed that after allusion in 1 Cor. x. to the baptism of the Israelites in the Red Sea, it is added, 'howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased.' One feels that there is a suggestive parallelism between Luke iii. 22, *ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα*, and 1 Cor. x. 5, *ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐν τοῖς πλείοσιν αὐτῶν εὐδόκησεν ὁ Θεός*.

Acts xxii. 16. of Damascus to Saul of Tarsus. 'Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.' This must be understood subjectively. It was in and at his baptism that Paul first knew and felt that he was forgiven; from that time forth peace and Divine comfort filled his soul.

Acts viii. 39. And why do we read of the *joy* of the Ethiopian eunuch; and of the Philippian jailor after baptism,  
 Acts xvi. 34. except that in both instances baptism brought to them the conscious realization of all that their faith had grasped?

And is it not thus plain that God has appointed this ordinance for this purpose; that there may be from the beginning a 'knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins'; a clear and felt perception of the exalted position to which by faith we have attained? and is not all this in accordance with God's own word of promise that if we confess Him He will confess us?

Luke i. 77.  
 Matt. x. 32.

In proportion to the degree in which we suffer affliction for His name is the degree of consolation wherewith He comforts us.

Where there is baptism (especially in the mission field) there there is more or less of trial and suffering. The cross of Christ is then *first* felt; and it is easy to see that it was intended that the ordinance itself should minister the consolation needed for the suffering of which it is itself in part the cause: as it is written, 'as the sufferings of

Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ' and through the ordinances 2 Cor. i. 5. which Christ has appointed.

Missionary experience teaches us that converts look upon their baptism as the time when their sins are forgiven them, from the fact that they then first realize it.

So St. Paul appeals to the Ephesian Christians to forgive one another on the ground that God in Christ forgave them (the tense is very important as given in the Revised Version), evidently reminding them of their baptismal experience. Ephes. iv. 32.

And St. Peter, in a still more evident allusion to the baptismal washing, speaks of one who had 'forgotten the cleansing from his old sins,' meaning 2 Pet. i. 9. that by a careless walk he had lost that happy consciousness of forgiveness which he might reasonably be taken to have enjoyed in his baptism.

## LXIX

LASTLY, with regard to the unction.

Our Lord's anointing with the Holy Ghost conferred power (*δύναμις* not *ἐξουσία*), prophetic power, such as we read of in Micah iii. 8. 'Truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord; and of judgment and of might to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.' Thenceforward Jesus became 'a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,' for God Luke xxiv. 19.



Acts x. 38. anointed Him 'with the Holy Ghost and with power.'

And it was immediately after His baptism (the temptation only intervening) that Jesus 'returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and a fame went out concerning Him through all the region round about,' viz., fame as a prophet, which fame, however, was least in His own village, where He testified, saying, 'Verily, I say unto you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.'

After this example, therefore, we believe that all those who profess Christ in baptism receive an anointing.

Unlike the assurance of sonship and pardon, which in the nature of things can only be given to those who *are* sons and *are* forgiven, the anointing in some form or degree is given to all who profess with sincerity their belief of the Gospel.

We must remember that this public profession of Christ, if sincere, is made through the Spirit of God, as *for* baptism and *in* baptism all must say that Jesus is the Lord (Κύριος Ἰησοῦς), and no man can say so sincerely except by the Holy Ghost.

And thus by the same Spirit all are baptized into the same body, because under the influence of (ἐν) the same Spirit they all make their profession of faith.

This done, a manifestation of some sort is given to every man to profit withal.

These divers gifts of the Spirit are enumerated

in 1 Cor. xii., but to every man is given whatever will fit him best for the work to which he is called, and which the circumstances in which he is placed render necessary.

So when Israel came out of Egypt, and God put His Holy Spirit within him, we read 'there was not one feeble person among their tribes.' They were *all* like the Church at Pentecost, endued with power from on high. The same rain of God's grace fell upon all.<sup>1</sup>

Isaiah lxiii.  
11.

Ps. cv. 37.

Heb. vi. 7.  
Matt. v. 45.

## LXX

THE baptism with the Holy Ghost, wherewith Jesus baptizes, must not be regarded as identical with regeneration, but, in fact, as quite distinguished from it, nor even as *necessarily* implying its existence.

Matt. iii. 11.

Regeneration is not a baptism, but a birth, a creation.

Baptism with the Holy Ghost is an outpouring of the Holy Ghost—even that special outpouring foretold by the prophet Joel.

Acts ii. 17.

Joel ii. 28.

Beginning at Pentecost, it has continued in a less conspicuous form ever since.

<sup>1</sup> In reference to the words of John Baptist that Christ should baptize with the Holy Ghost *and with fire*, it is instructive to remember the 'cloven tongues like as of fire' which appeared at Pentecost, with the additional fact that 'it sat upon each of them,' which leads us to remark that in the baptism of Israel the *cloud* was the special emblem of the Holy Ghost. They were baptized not only in the sea but in the *cloud*. This cloud was not a form of water, but of *fire*; as appears from many Scriptures.

Isaiah iv. 4, 5 should be studied in connection with this point.

The baptism with the Holy Ghost is the unction from the Holy One (*i.e.* from Christ). The bestowal of 'gifts differing according to the grace given unto us,' which 'gifts' some 'occupy,' others 'neglect,' but of which all must give account to their Lord hereafter.

1 John ii. 20.

Rom. xii. 6.

This truth has been felt so strongly by some writers that they have been led to denominate baptism the sacrament of responsibility. We would be more disposed, however, to speak of it as the sacrament of *faith*, and of the Lord's Supper as the sacrament of *love*; for when both work together in their fulness our salvation is sure.

The most usual form which the anointing takes is 'illumination.'

There are at least two passages of Scripture where baptism is spoken of as bringing illumination, viz., Heb. vi. 4, and x. 32.

This illumination or enlightenment means knowledge; and its communication, whilst it increases our power to 'lay hold on eternal life,' increases also our guilt, if we remain 'barren' or 'unfruitful' under it.

1 Tim. vi. 12.

2 Pet. i. 8.

All persons so anointed, so baptized with the Holy Ghost, are thereby sanctified, not in the sense of cleansed from sin, but as separated from common use, and set apart for the service of God; which kind of sanctification, or dedication, persons share

with places, buildings, garments, vessels, &c., which are said to be 'holy.'

Probably we should so understand the word when our Lord applies it to Himself in John x. 36, 'Say ye of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world.' That is, whom the Father set apart for this special service of saving mankind.

And in this sense, and for this cause, all the baptized are continually called saints (*ἅγιοι*) consecrated persons, devoted (formally) to the Lord who bought them, consecrated by His Spirit to His service.

Yet all this may take place and often, we fear, does take place without regeneration, without even leading on to it. The Spirit may bestow many gifts without gaining entrance for Himself: in which case the grace is received in vain; nay an insult is offered to the Holy Ghost, which in the light of such texts as Mark iii. 29, and Hebrew x. 29 is awful to contemplate. God grant that he who writes and they who read these words may never come into such condemnation !

## SUMMARY CONCERNING BAPTISMAL GRACE

## LXXI

OUR views, therefore, concerning the grace of baptism, viewed as a sacrament, need not be indefinite, nor confused. That Jesus should have instituted such a rite, without attaching peculiar blessings to its reception, is an idea which cannot for a moment be entertained.

But the *grace is proportional to the faith* exercised. If the convert believes with his whole heart that Jesus Christ is God, that He was made man, died, rose again, and now lives to save sinners ; if he believe these simple, but glorious Gospel truths with the heart, then we know from many a Scripture, without a shadow of uncertainty, that he is not only forgiven all trespasses, but that he is passed from death to life, is quickened with Christ and begotten of God—in one word he is REGENERATE. And in his baptism and through the instrumentality of his baptism he is not only joined to the community of those who outwardly profess the religion of Christ, *i.e.* the Church ; but he is also *assured* of his regeneration, his pardon and adoption are *certified* to him ; moreover he receives the anointing, *i.e.* whatever gifts the Holy Ghost thinks best to bestow, having regard to his circumstances, work, and difficulties.

But if his faith fall short of this, the grace is proportionately less.

If it be simply an irresistible conclusion wrought in him by the Holy Ghost (for thus only can it be wrought) that Christianity is true—if fear only operates impelling him to profess his belief; then—though he will not hear in his baptism any voice testifying to his adoption and forgiveness—yet is he not left without grace; he is become a ‘saint’; the anointing spirit illuminates, encourages, draws him, if so be, he may advance to a truer faith and a closer union with his Saviour.

Oftentimes the grace so bestowed is effectual to regeneration—sometimes, alas! not.

Lastly, let it be observed that whenever any in utter levity, or in hypocrisy, allow themselves to be baptized, ‘brought in at unawares,’ by those who keep the door of the fold—such can have no witness either to their adoption or forgiveness (for they are neither adopted nor forgiven) nor do they receive any anointing, seeing they come not in by the Holy Ghost (ἐν Πνεύματι), but by the will of man (ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός); such are *called* indeed saints and brethren, but, being hypocrites, inherit a curse instead of a blessing; and if they be teachers of false doctrine (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι), as they sometimes are, they ‘bring upon themselves swift destruction.’

2 Pet. ii. 1.

As for infants they are in baptism brought to

Christ in the hope and expectation that as soon as possible they will, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, *come* to Him themselves; but the subjective moral effects which make the ordinance so important, and so precious as a *sacrament* to adult believers, are with these necessarily in abeyance.

## LXXII

HENCE the value of the rite of confirmation. Baptism being an outward confession of faith, a public disavowal of the old covenant and a putting on of Christ, *i.e.* a looking for justification by faith in Him; it does seem a most wise appointment to give those who have been baptized as infants a definite and solemn opportunity of declaring their faith in the presence of God and the congregation; and of making it publicly known that they do themselves approve and ratify the act of their parents, and will by God's help walk in that newness of life which their baptism figured forth.

Rom. vi. 4.

And when this opportunity is offered and embraced in the rite of confirmation, who will doubt that grace is given in proportion to the young Christian's self-consecration, and this on account of his own personal faith, and not another's.

Yet we cannot say that confirmation is a necessary, though it is a valuable and important ordinance. The Supper of the Lord yields all the comfort and strength needed by the tried Christian who wishes to bear distinct testimony for Christ;



but confirmation serves beautifully to connect baptism with the Supper, and is a most appropriate prelude to the Table of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

## ON THE OBLIGATIONS INVOLVED IN BAPTISM.

### LXIII

THERE remains another and very important aspect of baptism, already alluded to, but deserving more full consideration.

Baptism always is, whether in adults or in infants, an act which binds and pledges to a life of holiness. So that whoever leads an unholy sinful life practically denies and repudiates his baptism.

Of course we are bound and pledged under

<sup>1</sup> It is possible that a clearer understanding of the meaning of the confirmation service would result if before the first question, 'Do ye here,' &c., the Bishop were to speak as follows:—

'If there be anyone here present who desireth to abjure and repudiate the act of his godfathers and godmother in his baptism, having no desire to follow the Christian religion, but some other: Or if there be anyone who thinketh to be justified not by faith but by his own righteousness and good works, let him now declare the same before God and this congregation.'

If none answer, then shall the Bishop say 'Do ye here,' &c.

The laying on of hands is the ordinary Scripture sign of the impartation of blessing; nor is it unimportant to observe that when our Lord left His Church 'He lifted up His hands and blessed' His disciples; and although some days intervened, yet we may fairly connect the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost with the laying on of hands involved in our Saviour's parting gestures.

any circumstances to obey the commands of our Creator-God, but in baptism we deliberately pledge ourselves so to do. So that sin is not only contrary to the law of God, but to our own profession, and becomes on that account the more sinful if we live in it.

There is no occasion for the convert to make any *promise* in his baptism—any promise, that is, of allegiance to Christ, or of obedience, much less of faith.

Nobody has any right to be baptized upon a *promise* of faith; nothing could be more unscriptural. To baptize an infant because someone else promises faith on his behalf is altogether contrary to the fundamental idea of the rite, which must *declare existent faith* or be an empty form.

\* Baptism is an act implying *present* allegiance and *actual* submission to the Gospel. It *signifies* a real death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness; and if the faith which underlies the baptism be pure enough, and strong enough, it not only *signifies* but *witnesses* to regeneration which has already taken place.

But whether the convert has actually passed from death unto life or not, at all events his baptism lays claim to it, and puts him under an obligation to prove the reality of such claim by his life thenceforward.

Any formal promise is therefore out of place.

Baptism is not itself a covenant, but an act whereby we accept and ratify a covenant, and the baptized person is expected by God and man to live unto Christ, or he will be counted to have belied his profession.

## LXXIV

THE Scriptures which establish this are many and explicit.

We find, as under such circumstances we should expect to find, two sets of texts; the one affirming the fact of the profession, the other exhorting to its unwavering fulfilment.

In Galatians iii. 27 St. Paul reminds his converts, saying, 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ'; or, as more accurately rendered in the Revised Version, 'As many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ'—that is, did then and there declare yourselves to be Christians, and make known your determination by God's help to live as Christians ought to live. But in Rom. xiii. 14 the same Apostle bids the baptized 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ,' and not 'make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' In other words, he bids them act up to the obligation imposed upon them in a special way by their baptism.

In Gal iv. 24. we read 'they that are Christ's have crucified (more properly, crucified) the flesh with the affections and lusts.' All the baptized are

Rom. vi. 3. *accounted* as crucified with Christ—as dead to sin—as baptized into His death—which last expression signifies entrance not only into the blessings and privileges obtained for us by the death of Christ, but also into that new state of things of which mortification of the deeds of the body is a distinguishing mark.

This therefore being the obligation imposed by baptism we are elsewhere taught to ‘mortify our members which are upon the earth,’ and are told that if we ‘by the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body we shall live.’ Yea, our blessed Lord Himself instructs us upon this point, thus saying, ‘if any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’ To do otherwise is to falsify our baptism.

## LXXV

Moreover the death represented in baptism is also a death to the law. ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to them that believe.’ Baptism enshrines and embodies this blessed peace-giving truth.

If therefore after baptism we expect to be justified by the works of the law we ‘fall from grace’—*i.e.* we abandon the position we took up in baptism wherein we *professed* to clothe ourselves with a righteousness not our own, but freely given to us in Christ Jesus, and in that righteousness to stand;

so that if at any time we attach any degree of *merit* to our own works as helping to atone for our misdeeds, we dishonour and contravene our baptism. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the significance of baptism than any reliance upon works for justification.

Credens non operans homo justificatur, at ἔργους  
Perspicitur vivax perficiturque fides.

Rom. iii. 28.

Jam. ii. 24.

Again, it being the fundamental significance of baptism that in it the 'old man' is put off and the 'new man' put on—in accordance with this profession (we must speak of it as a profession only if every case is to be included)—in accordance with this profession we are exhorted to *put off* anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication out of our mouth, and to *put on* as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering : to *cast off* the works of darkness and *put on* the armour of light.

Col. iii. 8,  
10, 12.

Rom. xiii. 12.

To do, in effect, whatever our baptism declares us to have already done, thus creating an added obligation so to do.

## LXXVI

LASTLY, our baptism proclaims our rising with Christ quite as much as our death in and with Him. In fact the symbolical teaching of baptism is very closely connected with resurrection truths.

Col. ii. 12.

Acts xiii. 33.

It was to the resurrection of Jesus Christ that St. Peter applied the language of Psalm ii. : ‘Thou art My beloved Son ; this day have I begotten Thee.’

Here the words ‘Thou art My beloved son’ connect the Resurrection with the baptism, for they were spoken at both—but the rest of the words ‘this day have I begotten Thee’ were not uttered at His baptism, because they referred only to the day of His resurrection.

Even so our resurrection is not absolute until we are risen with Christ.

Rom. vi. 5.

It is true that the death unto sin and new birth unto righteousness are inseparately and invariably connected, for ‘if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death *we shall be* also in the likeness of his resurrection.’

But it is this risen life which is our salvation.

Col. iii. 2.

In accordance therefore with this profession and *assumed fact*, as expressed in baptism, that we are risen with Christ, we are affectionately called upon to walk in newness of life—not to live to ourselves but ‘to Him who died for us and rose again’—to ‘set our affections upon things above, not on things on the earth’—to walk, in fact, ‘worthy of our high calling,’ as becometh saints, ‘continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.’

## LXXVII

ENOUGH has been said to show the serious obligation laid upon every baptized person to live ‘soberly, righteously, and godly’ in this present world. It is much to be desired that this obligation were more felt, and better understood. Titus ii. 12.

The solemn service of confirmation has proved to multitudes a great help hereunto, but how quickly do our sincerest convictions and strongest resolutions evaporate, if there be not the root of the matter in us, viz., the *indwelling* Spirit of God and of Christ ! Job xix. 28.

Here indeed is the most vital element in our salvation. ‘IF *SO BE* that the spirit of God dwell in you,’ words addressed by the great Apostle to baptized Christians to lead them to search their hearts whether they were really Christ’s, or not. Rom. viii. 9.

But if the Spirit of God be in us of a truth, how wonderful are those gracious offices whereby He makes us ‘meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in life.’ Col. i. 12.

Renewing our inward man as the outward perishes. 2 Cor. iv. 16.

Shedding abroad in our hearts such an abiding sense and conviction of the Divine love towards us as neither tribulation nor distress nor persecution, nor famine, nakedness, peril, nor sword can shake. Rom. v. 5.  
Rom. viii. 35.



Rom. viii. 16. Bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

Teaching us to cry Abba Father.

Rom. viii. 26. Helping our infirmities by his intercessions for us.

John xvi. 13. Guiding us into all truth ; and working in us

Heb. xiii. 21. mightily all that is well-pleasing in our Father's sight !

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

#### LXXVIII

AND now we have little left to say. Our thoughts have been few, but we trust they have been well weighed ; at all events they have not been quickly conceived, or hurriedly expressed. The aim has been to give a clear outline of the whole subject, but only an outline, and many will doubtless consider a very imperfect one.

Many of our reasonings will have appeared to the reader weak and inconclusive, and possibly are, though we are ' fully persuaded in our own mind.'

Rom. xiv. 5.

We lay no claim to infallibility, but only to an earnest desire to discover truth upon a subject which has perplexed many, as it has ourselves.

The discovery and elucidation of truth being the sole object, the Scriptures of truth have been alone appealed to.

The points which we have endeavoured to bring

into prominence as of greater importance than generally supposed, are :—

1. The distinctly missionary character of the ordinance.

2. Its close and manifold relations to faith ; especially its embodiment of the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith.

3. Its subjective sacramental power in giving comfort and strength to the young convert by the *assurance* of participation in all the blessings of the better covenant.

We hold that sacramental grace, that is, grace conveyed through sacraments, is subjective rather than objective ; but none the less real on this account.

This most important distinction explains most of the difficulties which surround the subject in the minds of many, and its application to baptism has, we trust, been fully established in these pages.

## LXXIX

It is hoped that the portion of this little treatise which argues for the permanence of regeneration will not give offence to the pious reader.

The views we hold on this point are urged, we hope, with proper modesty, the difficulty of the subject being fully admitted ; but if the reader will kindly remember that, side by side with the per-

manence of regeneration, we have distinctly shown that nothing but steadfastness in the faith and patient continuance in well-doing afford absolute proof of regeneration, he will find light thrown upon much that is obscure, and much that has excited controversial bitterness.

In handling this and each successive point we have been specially desirous of dealing honestly with Holy Writ.

We have met with so much in different writers, so evidently and palpably unfair in the way of argument, that care has been taken to avoid even the appearance of such an evil.

Not an uncommon proceeding on the part of polemical writers on theological subjects—not excepting the subject of these pages—is to attach corks of truth to a false doctrine to make it float, and leads of exaggeration to true doctrine to make it sink, and so to spread their nets for unwary fish.

We trust nothing of this sort will be met with here.

#### LXXX

We have purposely avoided saying anything about the manner in which baptism ought to be administered, or by whom.

These things are not dwelt upon in God's Word, and therefore cannot be so very important. And we are inclined to think that the enemy of souls has contrived to do a vast amount of harm by

exaggerating these comparatively unimportant accidents, on purpose to draw away attention from that which is essential and profitable.

In the mission field the poor heathen do not inquire whether one of their number, who has forsaken his idols and proclaimed himself a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, was sprinkled or immersed ; it makes no difference to them how exactly he was baptized, so long as he actually was baptized. His baptism, however carried out, however administered, is regarded simply in the light of an abandonment of his father's or his mother's creed, and his subjection to the faith of Jesus Christ : he is treated as a renegade, as an object of scorn or pity, just as much if sprinkled as if immersed. Nor does it signify to the convert himself which it is, so long as he enrolls himself amongst those that fear the Lord and call upon His name.

It may be granted that the symbolism varies with the mode of administration.

By affusion or sprinkling, the anointing and outpouring of the Holy Ghost is best expressed ; by immersion, death, burial, and resurrection with and in Christ.

Possibly a combination of both of these might be used in order to enhance the scenic and symbolic aspect of the rite.

Certainly, had these things been vital, God would have given us clearly to understand so,

but in the entire absence of any definite direction *how* to baptize we need not debate the matter ; much less need it divide us.<sup>1</sup>

1 Tim. i. 4.      This subject therefore has been avoided as ministering ‘questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith.’

1 Cor. xiv. 40.      Nor would it appear to be of any greater moment to determine *who* should perform the ceremony, the silence of Scripture on this point showing that it is immaterial, so long as all things are done decently and in order, which thing is provided for when those who labour in the word and doctrine are charged with the duty (under ordinary circumstances) of administering this rite.

Nor yet is any particular form of words prescribed.

If words are used they seem to belong rather to the baptized than to the baptizing person.<sup>2</sup> In the case of an infant it would be to the parent or sponsor bringing the child.

Cor. xii. 3.      The words ‘Jesus is the Lord’ (κύριος Ἰησοῦς)

<sup>1</sup> Neither *submersion*, or even *immersion*, are essential to the symbolism of burial if ancient modes of thought are to be any guides to us in this matter. Simple sprinkling with earth or sand three times was regarded as sufficient, from a religious point of view, for *burial*. Cf. Hor. Odes I. xxviii. 23, 24, 36 : ‘licebit, injecto ter pulvere, curras.’

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the phrase ‘by the Word,’ ἐν ῥήματι, in Ephes. v. 26, has been commented upon in paragraph lviii.

seem to be a remnant of some formula uttered by the baptized person, setting forth in words what his baptism declared in figure. The Apostles' Creed probably also had a baptismal origin, expressing as it does belief in the Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Anyhow we may be quite sure that the virtue of the ordinance did not reside in what the baptizer, but in what the baptized person said.

## A FEW WORDS OF PRACTICAL APPLICATION

### LXXXI

THERE is a practical application of the whole subject with which we may fitly conclude.

The Holy Scriptures are full of earnest appeals on different grounds to 'cease to do evil and learn to do well.'

Isaiah i. 16,  
17.

The appeal is to conscience, whenever the guilt of sin and God's justice in punishing it is demonstrated;

To fear, whenever the danger of provoking God's anger, and the terrible consequences of sin are pointed out;

Heb. x. 31.

To reason, whenever the folly of losing the soul for the sake of gaining even the whole world is shown.

Matt. xvi. 26.

But in addition to these ordinary grounds of appeal we find two others specially addressed to

*baptized* Christians and to Christians because they are baptized.

Rom. vi. 11,  
12.

We are specially exhorted—provided the foundation of repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ have been duly laid—not to waste time about determining whether our faith is much or little, strong or weak, but rather to *reckon* ourselves to be ‘dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ;’ and then, acting upon this assumption (if it may be so called), to live as those who *are* dead to sin, and not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies.

2 Pet. i. 10.

Again we are urged not to waste time in determining whether we are, or are not, *elect*, but rather, assuming ourselves to be of the elect, to go about to *prove it* by giving all diligence hereunto.

It is futile to inquire whether God would bid us *reckon* ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto Himself, if we actually were not so.

The fact is, the matter is secret from us and belongs to God, except so far as He sees fit to reveal it to us by His Spirit.

Rom. vi. 12,  
19.

It is our wisdom, it is every man’s wisdom who has any faith in Christ, to take it for granted that he is called, elect, and predestinated to Eternal Life, and upon this supposition to ‘yield himself to God, and his members instruments of righteousness unto holiness.’



Of course if any man assume that he is regenerate and elect, and *on this very ground* dares to live carelessly, as one destined to be saved however he may live—such a man grossly deceives himself, and gives the strongest evidence of an unregenerate heart and nature.

Let us then accustom ourselves to the high appellation of Children of God ; let us keep in view the inheritance reserved for us as children ; and let us aim in all things to walk worthy of our high vocation and calling ; for so doing we shall never fall, but make our calling and election sure, *i.e.* show that in assuming ourselves to be called and elect we were not mistaken.

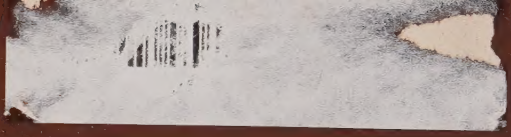
Never for one instant is it to be supposed that we—taking God at His word—and reckoning ourselves to be all that our baptism means, and living consistently with such profession and such hopes, would or could be rejected in the final judgment on the ground of having been neither known, called, nor elect.











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